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THE

WORKS

OF

LADY BLESSINGTON;

IN TWO VOLUMES:

CONTAINING

THE TWO FRIENDS,
THE REPEALERS,
CONFESSIONS OF AN ELDERLY GENTLEMAN,
CONFESSIONS OF AN ELDERLY LADY,
THE VICTIMS OF SOCIETY,
CONVERSATIONS WITH LORD BYRON,
THE HONEY-MOON,
GALERIA,
FLOWERS OF LOVELINESS,
GEMS OF BEAUTY.

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THE CONFESSIONS

OF AN

ELDERLY LADY.

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How interminably long the days are! Though broken by repasts, visits, airings, and reading, still they creep on with leaden feet. Heigh-ho! It was not thus in the days of my youth. Then the hours seemed to have wings, and flew away so rapidly, that I often wished to retard their flight. But every thing is changed! The very seasons are no longer the same; and their productions bear no more comparison with those that I remember, than—what shall I say?—than the young persons, misnamed beauties, in these degenerate days, do, with the lovely women who were my contemporaries. Yes, the flowers have lost their fragrance, the fruit its flavor, and the vegetables taste as if created by some chemical process. The newspapers, too, partake the general change; and are, for the most part, filled with the movements of stupid lords and silly ladies; or the speeches of some demagogue placarded into notice, by the praise of one party and abuse of another. Parliamentary debates, instead of displaying the magniloquent march of sonorous words that were wont to charm my youthful ears, rendering each speech worthy of a place in that excellent work entitled "Enfield's Speaker," are now reduced to colloquies, quite as familiar as if the debaters were seated round their tables, after dinner, and had only their convivial guests, and not the nation, as audience. To be sure, people did assert that Dr. Johnson wrote the reported speeches, but so much the better, say I: for they will stand as honorable records of the abilities of my contemporaries, when the world no longer remembers the rumor of their Johnsonian parentage, and will form an admirable contrast to the inflated common places, or flimsy theories of the present time.

I have but one consolation for the degeneracy of the age, and that consists in the conviction that few records of it will descend to posterity. People seem to lose all respect for the past; events succeed each other with such velocity that the most remarkable one of a few years gone by, is no more remembered than if centuries had closed over it. The present race seem to think only of the actual minute. They are prodigals, who give no thought to their predecessors, and no care to their successors. People were not thus heartless in my youthful days—but every thing is changed!

The magazines, too, how they are fallen off! No longer do two interesting looking heads, ycleped "A *tête-a-tête*," or "The fair deceiver and the enamored Philander," meet the gaze, initiating one into some recent *morçeau* of amusing scandal. No—the portrait of some would-be-beauty, or modern author, stares one in the face endeavoring to look handsome, or clever, with all her, or his, might, but as it is not often that artists succeed in bestowing either of these expressions on their subjects, they are, frequently, as unkindly treated by art, as by nature.

Then the matter of these magazines—how infinitely inferior are they to those of my youth! Pretentious philosophical disquisitions on recent discoveries in science—sketchy tales, with shadowy personages—crude reviews on as crude literary productions—poems guiltless of thought—and a *réchauffée* of the events of the past month, insipid as *réchauffées* generally are.

The editors of the ephemeral productions to which I allude, ambitious to contain in their pages some attractive article, and knowing the craving appetites of their readers for personalities, dress up a forgot-

ten anecdote, or obsolete scandal, with the sauce *piquant* of innuendoes and exaggerations; or else with tales professing to treat of fashionable life, with characters that bear no more resemblance to living ones than do the figures on which milliners and tailors display their garments for sale. But their conclusions satisfy the crowd, who, unable to penetrate the sanctuaries of aristocratic life, cannot judge of the coarseness and want of truth of the pretended representations.

The study of history, I carefully eschew —for modern historians are all would-be-philosophers; who, instead of relating facts as they occurred, give us their version, or rather perversions of them, always colored by their political prejudices, or distorted to establish some theory, and rendered obscure by cumbrous attempts to trace effect from cause. They tell us not only what potentates, heroes, and statesmen, said, or are imagined to have said, but also, not unfrequently, favor us with what they *thought;* though they do not quite satisfy us as to the authenticity of the sources whence they derived their information. Poetry I have been compelled to abandon, ever since Byron demoralised the public taste, by substituting passion for sentiment; and originated a herd of servile imitators of all his defects, but who possess not one ray of the genius that redeemed them.

Dryden, Waller, Pope, were the poets read in my youth. Their lofty thoughts came to us in as lofty diction, like the beauties of that day, attired in their court dresses. Novels were then an agreeable resource. Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa Harlowe—how often have I dwelt on your pages, my sympathy excited, and my reason satisfied. Yes—Richardson's heroines were not only women, but, with the exception of Pamela, they were gentlewomen, a class that seems now to have passed away from our modern novels, as wholly as they have from society: a genus ycleped "ladies" being substituted, which no more resembles their dignified progenitors, than the flimsy draperies of the modern originals of these meretricious shadows, do the substantial velvets and brocades in which my stately contemporaries were attired.

Times are indeed sadly changed! Fashion, a nondescript which, like Milton's allegorical personification of death, has no definite shape, has now usurped the place of decorum; and, like death, levels all distinctions. This same fashion is a monstrous growth of these degenerate days, which, like the idol of Juggernaut, often crushes those who prostrate themselves before her revolving wheel. It is the sworn foe to all that is good and respectable; and encourages only the parvenues which spring up beneath its unwholesome shade, as does the fungus beneath that of some tree, whose deleterious moisture gives it birth.

Well *I*, at least, have not bowed down and worshipped this colossal idol. I have not left the residence of my ancestors, because fashion had proscribed its precincts, to become the neighbor of some returned nabob, or retired bill-broker, with no recommendation, save his ill-acquired wealth. I have not dismantled my mansion of its cumbrous, but richly carved furniture, to adopt at a later period, a composition in imitation of it. No—I saw the rage for Grecian and Roman decoration pass by, as calmly as I have since seen them replaced by the angular *ameublement* of the melo-dramatic Emperor of the French; and have lived to witness the solid magnificence of the fourteenth Louis, revived by those who are as incapable of comprehending, as of emulating the splendor and abilities of that dignified model for kings. I smile at beholding the ill-executed imitations in the mansions of my acquaintance, of the costly furniture which, from mine, has never been displaced; while they would gladly purchase back their ancestral possessions from the brokers who have collected them to sell again at more than thrice their original cost.

Yes, it is very satisfactory to my feelings to witness the restoration of true taste in furniture, at least; almost as much so as it was to see Louis XVIII restored to the throne of his forefathers, whence his less fortunate brother has been exiled. We have fallen upon evil days; "the march of intellect," as they call it, has been in my opinion a triumphal march over the prostrated privileges of sovereigns, who dare no longer consider their subjects as their unalienable property, nor govern by the good old monarchical principle of "*Je veux.*"

This is a melancholy and an unnatural state of things; but I console myself with thinking that it cannot last, though, alas! it bids fair to endure my time; consequently, I am somewhat disposed to adopt the philosophy of the fifteenth Louis, and exclaim "*Aprés nous le deluge.*"

I wish I had children, for I should in

that case, have had now around me a third generation of scions from the parent stem, who might have loved me, and whom *I* might have loved; at all events, over whose destinies my fortune would have given me an influence: and next to loving, and being loved, is the pleasure of governing. But this wearisome solitude, imposed by age and infirmities, and uncheered by fond faces, or affectionate voices, it is hard to bear. Nature has implanted in every breast the yearning desire to be an object of sympathy and affection to its fellow. The young feel it, but they feel too, the glad conscicusness of posseesing the power to excite, and repay the sentiment; while the old are too well aware how unlovely is age, not to distrust the appearance of an attachment, they fear they are incapable of creating. They become suspicious and peevish from this humiliating self-knowledge, and consequently less worthy of the affection for which they yearn.

Every one now writes, and the occupation may serve to amuse me, even though the fruits fail to amuse others; and thus I who love to live in the past, may borrow from it the means of rendering the present less insupportable. Shall I then take courage, make my confessions to the public, and trust to it for absolution? It is an indulgent monster after all, which swallows much that is bad. Why, therefore, should I fear it? But who will read the confessions of an old woman? and in an age when every thing old, except furniture, plate, and wine, is exploded? *N'importe*, if those only wrote, who were sure of being read, we should have fewer authors; and the shelves of libraries would not groan beneath the weight of dusty tomes more voluminous than luminous. Yes, I *will* write my memoirs.

"Did your ladyship speak?" asked that much enduring woman, my *dame de compagnie*, one of the most uncompanionable of that class of persons denominated companions. My conscience does sometimes reproach me for sundry pettish reproofs, and petulant phoos and pshaws, addressed to this modern Griselda, who "assents to all I do or say," with a meekness very trying to a temper like mine. She, however, is at least ten years my junior, and will, in all human probability, live to enjoy the comfortable provision I have secured her in my will; thinking perhaps that she has well earned it, by a twenty years' daily and hourly practice of that difficult virtue—Patience.

Yes, I *will* write my confessions and "naught extenuate, or set down aught in malice." As a proof of my sincerity, I shall record my dialogue with my *dame de compagnie*.

"Mrs. Vincent, ring the bell, if you please—here, that will do; you always ring it as if you imagined the servants to be deaf."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon, but, if you will be pleased to recollect, you, this morning, complained that I rang the bell so gently that the servants never heard the first pull."

"Pray don't ask me to be pleased to recollect; I am never pleased to recollect such puerile fiddle faddle. Your memory is so tenacious, that you can quote every syllable I utter in the course of a week."

It will be perceived by the malicious reader, that in my petulance I was unconsciously comprising my own conversation within the contemptuous epithet of fiddle faddle. But whether my unhappy companion was equally acute, I cannot determine: for she was far too well disciplined to allow any indication of discovery to be perceptible.

"Why don't you ring the bell again? you see no one has answered."

Enter John.

"And so, John, here has Mrs. Vincent been ringing this last half hour. It is really *too* provoking that none of you will answer the bell."

"Very sorry, indeed, your ladyship, but I only heard the bell once."

"There, you are convinced, Mrs. Vincent; I always tell you, that you do not ring sufficiently loud; I wish you would remember this another time. Let me consider, what did I want? What did I require, Mrs. Vincent?"

"Indeed, madam, I do not know; your ladyship did not inform me."

"There it is, you never remember what I want; it is really enough to vex a saint."

"I'm sure, madam, I am very sorry."

"So you always say; I hear nothing but 'I beg your pardon, madam,' and 'I am very sorry,' all day long.—Place the easy chair with an extra pillow before my writing desk, wheel the desk close to the window, and put a tabouret for my feet. There, that will do. See that the pens are good, the ink not too thick, and lay a quire of foolscap wove paper on the desk; not that abominable glazed paper which dazzles my eyes. I intend to write, Mrs. Vincent, yes, to write a good deal,

unless it should fatigue me; so wipe my spectacles. You had better remain in the room, to see that the fire does not go out. You can read, if you like it; but mind you do not make a noise in turning over the leaves, you know you have a trick of doing so. And remember, too, you do not make that disagreeable sound to which you are much addicted, a sort of clearing of the trachea, which is extremely trying to my nerves. There again, Mrs. Vincent, have I not told you a thousand times not to give way to that offensive habit of sighing. I cannot bear it."

"I beg your ladyship's pardon, I am very sor"——

"Oh! dear—Oh! dear, I can never say a word to you, that you do not forthwith answer me with 'I beg your pardon, I am very sorry.'"

"Indeed, madam"——

"Don't say another word, spare my nerves; you know, or ought to know, that I detest explanations."

If my readers are not disgusted with this specimen of my irritability and egotism, I will proceed with my task.

My first recollections point to Walsingham Castle, where my happiest days were passed. Well do I remember a certain dressing-room in it that breathed the mingled odors of every fragrant flower, odors ever since associated in my mind with the memory of that chamber and its inmate. Reclined in an easy chair, propped by pillows, a fragile form draped in muslin of a snowy whiteness, used to meet my gaze. A pale but beautiful face, with large lustrous eyes, whose tender expression is even now remembered, used to welcome me with smiles. A soft delicate hand used to smooth my curls, and draw me fondly to her heart; and a low sweet voice, that only uttered words of love, used to greet me. Never can I forget the warm tears that often fell on my face and shoulders, when strained in the convulsive embrace of that lovely being.

Why does mamma weep when she kisses me?" demanded I, one day, of the upper nurse.

"You must not ask questions, Lady Arabella," was the satisfactory reply: a reply that generally met all the interrogatories I addressed to the pragmatical Mrs. Sydenham.

Good Mrs. Mary, as I designated her assistant, was less taciturn; and to my reiterated demand of why mamma wept? told me, with a deep sigh and melancholy shake of the head, that it was because mamma was going to leave me; and was sorry.

"But she sha'nt go, if she does not like it," answered I, with the wilfulness that even then characterised me; "I won't let her go."

"Poor child," murmured good Mrs. Mary, and a tear trembled in her eye.

The next time I entered the odorous dressing-room, mamma appeared to me suffering more than usual. Papa was sitting by her side, and held one of her hands in his. She embraced me fondly, and he took me on his knee. They looked at me, and then at each other, with an expression so piteous, that it reminded me of good Mrs Mary's explanation of mamma's tears, and I uttered imploringly, "Do not go away, dear sweet mamma, stay with papa and Arabella."

She burst into a passion of tears, and my father, too, became greatly agitated.

"Oh! yes," resumed I, "good Mrs. Mary told me you wept, because you were sorry to go away."

She sobbed in agony, and caught me to her breast, and my father pressed us both in his arms.

I saw my mother no more in the fragrant dressing-room; but was afterwards taken a few times to her bed-room, whence my father seldom moved. She looked paler than ever, and her voice was so low, that it could only whisper; still it uttered fond words, and sounded sweetly in my ears. Every one moved so gently, and spoke so softly in that room, that my steps only were heard; the other persons glided about like shadows. My father looked nearly as pallid as my mother, and scarcely ever glanced from her; unless when he turned to conceal the tears, that were continually springing to his eyes.

One day, I was sent for, and found my mother supported by pillows, and her eyes half closed. My father had been reading aloud to her; and I heard her murmur, "Thy will, not mine be done, O Lord!"

He took me in his arms, and held me to her. She pressed me faintly, but fondly; a few burning tears fell on my face, and she pronounced, in accents broken by the approach of death, a mother's last blessing. I, too, wept, though, alas! I knew not then what bitter cause I had for tears; and when my father offered to withdraw me from her fond embrace, I clung passionately to her. At this moment, the clergyman was announced: she relaxed her hold of me, and I was taken from the chamber violently sobbing.

I remember that when I reached the door, I looked back, and caught her tearful eyes strained to see me to the last. What agony was then in their expression!

I never saw my mother again, for she died in two hours after I was torn from her. To this early bereavement of the truest, tenderest friend that youth can ever know, I attribute all the errors of my life.

The next day, and the following one, I asked repeatedly to be taken to mamma. Mrs. Sydenham looked grave, said it could not be; and good Mistress Mary wept, and, though always affectionate to me, appeared still more so, notwithstanding that Mrs. Sydenham more than once reprimanded her, and sternly desired her not to spoil me.

In a week after, I was dressed in black, and noticed that all the household was similarly clad. I objected to this change in my dress, and said that mamma would not like my ugly black frock, as she was only fond of pretty white ones. This remark produced a few more tears from good Mistress Mary, who was again rebuked by Mrs. Sydenham, for being, as she termed it, always whimpering. I had an instinctive dislike to the upper nurse, and a preference to Mary, whose tears, though I knew not their source, soothed me.

The next day, the sounds of many carriage wheels, and the champing of steeds, drew me to the window of my nursery, which overlooked the court of the castle. I clapped my hands in childish glee, when I saw the cortege decked with nodding plumes, that moved slowly and proudly along.

"Where are all these fine carriages going?" asked I, "and why are so many of them black?"

"They are taking away your mamma, answered Mary, as well as her tears and sobs would allow her.

I, too, began to weep, exclaiming that they should not take my own dear, sweet mamma away; but the cortege continued to advance, until the last nodding plume vanished from my tearful sight, and I sank on the bosom of good Mary, exhausted by my sorrow. How silent was the whole castle! Not a sound was heard save the tolling of the church bell, that came booming on the ear from the distance, or the chimes of the great clock, as it marked the flight of time.

The gloom chilled me, and yet it was in unison with my feelings; for, though too young to comprehend the misfortune that had befallen me, a mysterious sympathy seemed to render silence and so row congenial to me.

The following day, my father sent for me. I found him in the library, so pale and care worn, that, young as I was, the alteration in his appearance struck me forcibly. He was clad in deep mourning, and his eyes indicated that tears had lately been no strangers to them.

I rushed into his arms and wept as I hid my face in his bosom, to which I fondly nestled, as I had been wont to do to the maternal one. He dismissed the attendant, and as he bent his head over mine; I felt his tears fall on my hair and neck, and heard the deep sighs that heaved his breast.

"You weep, dear papa," said I, "because my own sweet mamma is gone away. She, too, wept, for she was sorry to leave you and me. Do you remember, papa, how she cried and kissed us both?"

He clasped me convulsively, called me his last, his only comfort.

"But won't dear mamma come back to us?" asked I.

"No, my precious child, never; but we shall go to her."

"Oh! I am so glad; I hope, papa, it will be soon. And shall we, too, go in that black coach with all the nodding feathers? and will the bells toll, as when dear mamma went? How glad I shall be that day; and you, papa, will you not be glad?"

My poor father sobbed aloud, and I repeatedly kissed his cheek.

"Look here, my dear Arabella," said he, opening the miniature case now before me, "Do you know this face?"

"'Tis my own mamma; my dear, sweet mamma," answered I. "O! let me always have it to look at."

From this period, I spent a considerable portion of every day with my father, who never failed to show me the cherished miniature, or to talk to me of its dear and lost original.

A year elapsed before he left the solitude of Walsingham Castle; during that epoch he made me comprehend that my mother was dead. How well I recollect the feeling of awe that crept through my young heart, as he explained the nature of this tremendous but inevitable passage to eternity. Yet, though awed, I loved to dwell on the subject; and death, and a union with my mother, henceforth became an association of ideas in my mind, that robbed the one of its terrors, and softened the regret entertained for the other.

My father, never of a robust constitu-

tion, began to show symptoms of confirmed ill-health, in less than a year from the decease of my mother. So fervent had been his attachment to her, that time, though it soothed the bitterness of grief, could not obliterate her image, or console him for her loss; and I believe, that had he been childless, he would have hailed death as a release from an existence which had lost all charm for him since she had been torn from his arms.

It was solely for my sake that he submitted to a *regime* the most abstemious, and to a system of medical care, which condemned him to the most monotonous mode of existence imaginable. I was his constant companion; seated on a low tabouret, by his invalid chair or sofa, I established all my toys in his library, built card houses on his couch, accompanied him in all his airings, prattling to him every thought that passed through my infant mind, and never leaving him but with sorrow.

A fear that I inherited the malady of my mother, or his own delicacy of constitution operated continually on his imagination, rendered morbidly apprehensive, by a degree of sensibility rarely belonging to the male character, and nursed into existence by the loss he had sustained, and the seclusion in which he lived.

Mrs. Sydenham had been discharged soon after my mother's death, owing to some symptoms of dislike displayed towards her by me; and good Mrs. Mary, in consequence of the partiality I had evinced towards her, was elevated to the place of upper nurse.

Various and minute were the questions put by my poor dear father to her, when she brought me every morning to the library.

"How had I slept—had I eat my breakfast with appetite—had I been cheerful?" were interrogatories daily made. My countenance was anxiously examined, and my pulse felt by the affectionate and nervous valetudinarian; and a physician was in regular attendance, to report on the state of my health.

No wonder, then, that I soon began to discover that I was an object of no little importance in the house; a discovery almost always dangerous to the discoverer whether infant or adult. Consequently, I speedily displayed some infallible proofs of my acquired knowledge, by indulging in sundry caprices and petulancies not peculiarly agreeable to good Mrs. Mary; and very alarming to my poor father, when repeated to him in my nurse's phraseology which thus represented my ebullitions of ill humor: "Lady Arabella had been a little uneasy all the morning. Her ladyship had made a good breakfast, it was true, but she had refused to allow her mouth to be washed after, which she, good Mrs. Mary, was afraid was a sign of something feverish in the habit. Her little ladyship had thrown by all her dolls—in short she had not been as cheerful as usual."

Well did I observe the anxiety this intelligence occasioned my too indulgent parent; and my pride was gratified by it. The bell was rung, Dr. Warminster, the Halford of his day, sent for, and all good Mrs. Mary's information, detailed to him with scrupulous exactitude. My pulse was felt, my tongue examined, my eyes scrutinised; and after the termination of this profound investigation, I was pronounced, *ex cathedrâ*, to be in a state of perfect health.

"But, my dear doctor," asked my father "how do you account for her uneasiness? Do you not think it must have proceeded from some incipient feverish excitement acting on the system, some nervous derangement—eh, my good doctor?"

"I think, my dear lord," was the answer, "that your little girl requires at this period a governess more than a physician; and advise, by all means, your lordship's providing her with one, as soon as a person befitting the situation can be found."

"A governess, doctor, you surprise me!" replied my father; "what can a governess have to do with the symptoms of uneasiness I have related?"

"A good one may prevent a repetition of them, my lord. The truth is, your daughter is now of an age to stand in need of a more intellectual person than Mrs. Mary; one who can control her temper and direct her pursuits, as well as attend to her health."

"I assure you, doctor, that her temper is faultless," said my father; "and with regard to her pursuits, she is as far advanced as most children of her age. She can already spell several words, and is peculiarly intelligent."

"Her intelligence I admit," responded the doctor, with a peculiar smile, "but her progress in learning I think not very forward. Why, let me see, Lady Arabella must be now eight years old; and I do not know a child of that age that cannot read fluently, and speak two or more languages."

How attentively I listened to this dis-

logue! and how cordially did I dislike Doctor Warminster, who made so light of my acquirements!

My poor father looked distressed, and half offended; for I believe, that, judging from the precocious shrewdness of my observations viewed through the flattering medium of parental affection, he had hitherto considered me a sort of prodigy. The truth is, that from never having mingled with other children, and having lived so continually with my father, my intellectual faculties had attained a maturity disproportioned to my age and acquirements. I could *think* long before I could *read;* and now, that for the first time, I became aware that children of my age were more advanced in education than myself, my vanity was cruelly wounded; and I determined, with that strong volition that even then formed a peculiar characteristic of my nature, to forthwith apply myself to study.

When Doctor Warminster withdrew, I approached my father and looking in his face, asked him, in a reproachful tone, why I had not been taught to read? He appeared embarrassed, but tenderly embracing me, said that my studies should forthwith commence.

"What is a governess?" demanded I.

"A lady, my dear," replied my father, "who undertakes to instruct children in all that it is necessary that they should know."

"Then let me have a governess directly, papa; however she must be a nice, pretty governess; not an old ugly woman like Mrs. Sydenham, but one who will teach me to read very soon, and help me to build card houses on your sofa."

Never shall I forget the expression of perplexity which my poor father's countenance exhibited at this request.

"Why, my child," answered he, "when you have a governess, you must study your lessons with her, in another apartment;" and he sighed deeply as he finished the sentence.

"But I *won't* learn my lessons any where else but here," rejoined I petulantly; "and my governess *shall* teach me *here!*" And I burst into a paroxysm of tears.

This exhibition of my temper convinced my poor father of the justice of Doctor Warminster's observations relative to the necessity of having a governess for me. But it did not suggest to him the prudence of checking my wilfulness; for, instead of reprehending my peevishness, he fondly embraced and soothed me, promising that I should have a nice governess; though he was less explicit as to his intentions respecting her professional duties, a point which I had determined on exacting being performed in his presence in the library.

A few letters were next day addressed to the nearest female relations of my father, stating his desire of procuring a governess for me. I know not whether he informed them that good looks were an indispensable requisite in the lady who was to undertake the office; but I *do* know that the half dozen Mistresses and Misses who came recommended by them might have served as specimens of female ugliness. A glance at me, who returned it by a look of undisguised disapproval of the candidates, induced my father to dismiss each successively, with a polite intimation that they should hear from him in a few days.

Then came letters of remonstrance from the ladies who had sent them; each being extremely surprised that her *protegée*, Mrs. or Miss Tomkins or Thompson, had not been engaged, as she was precisely the most suitable, desirable, and appropriate person in existence. All these letters, of course, my father was compelled to answer; and the difficulty and anxiety of inventing plausible excuses, which should be satisfactory to the patronesses, and yet not unjust or offensive to the objects of their recommendation, increased the nervous trepidation of the poor invalid in no common degree.

I now began to think that a pretty governess was an unattainable good; and, in proportion to this belief, became my impatient desire to possess so precious a rarity. My father, with some hesitation and embarrassment, informed Doctor Warminster of his wish to procure a *young* lady as governess; and added, that his poor dear Arabella positively insisted that good looks should distinguish the person to be selected for the situation.

I was present when this statement was made; and could as little imagine why my poor father's pale cheek became tinged with red, as I could divine why Doctor Warminster first looked surprised, then smiled in a peculiar way, and at length, rubbing his hands, and positively chuckling outright, repeated,

"A *young* and *pretty* governess, my lord? why, bless my soul, youth and beauty are so generally objected to in teachers, that I am rather surprised—that

is, I am somewhat astonished that your lordship should consider them as indispensable requisites."

My father's cheek became still more red, as he hesitatingly replied,

"You mistake, my good doctor; it is not I, but my daughter, who entertains this desire; and my poor Arabella has been so accustomed to be indulged, that in a point on which she seems to have set her heart, I do not wish that she should be thwarted."

"But your lordship is aware, that a young and pretty woman living in the house of a single man, may give rise to surmises injurious to her, and not agreeable to her employer."

My father looked still more embarrassed but he falteringly replied,

"My reputation, doctor, ought to be, I should hope, a sufficient guarantee against all such surmises. No one who knows me, could suppose that I could so far forget what is due to my only child, as to place an instructress over her, of whose morals I had not the best opinion."

"I beg your lordship's pardon; *I* did not presume to doubt your morals, nor those of the young lady, whoever she may be, who is to fill the situation of governess to Lady Arabella; I only alluded to what the world would be likely to say on such a subject."

"I won't have an ugly governess, that I won't," said I, bursting into tears; for I had conceived the impression, that Doctor Warminster was opposed to my having a pretty one.

The doctor smiled spitefully, as I thought; and my poor father wiped my eyes, and kissed my cheeks. Encouraged by his caresses, I repeated, "I *will* have a pretty governess! a *very* pretty governess! shan't I, dear papa?"

As I thus vociferated, I looked triumphantly at the doctor, who took his leave, promising to seek for the sort of person "that would satisfy the fastidious taste of Lady Arabella."

The following week brought a letter from the widow of a beneficed clergyman on one of my father's estates, detailing, that from her scanty income and large family, she was anxious to place one of her daughters in some family as governess; and entreating his lordship to exert himself with his female relations to procure her a situation. She added, that she hoped the youth of her daughter would not be an insuperable objection, as she was remarkably steady.

"Why, this is the very thing," said my father.

"What, papa?" asked I.

"I think, my dear," answered he, "that I have at last found you a governess.

"O! I am so glad, so very glad," and I clapped my hands with joy; "is she very young, dear papa? and is she very, *very* pretty?"

"Yes; very young, my dear," replied my father, "and very good, I am sure; for her father was an exemplary man, and her mother, I have heard, is an amiable woman."

"But is she very pretty, papa?"

"I don't know, my love, for I have never seen her; but, dear Arabella, remember what I have often told you, that it is better to be good than pretty."

"But I will have her pretty, and good too; for all pretty people are good, and ugly people are bad and cross."

"Indeed you are wrong, my child."

Doubtlessly he was proceeding to demonstrate my error; but I interrupted him, by saying:

"No, indeed, papa, I am not wrong; don't you remember how pretty, how very, very pretty my own dear sweet mamma was, and you often told me, no one was ever so good."

He pressed me to his breast, and a tear moistened my cheek; but I had not yet finished my exordium, so continued:

"And you, dear papa, you are very pretty, and who was ever so good?"

He kissed me again.

"But naughty Mrs. Sydenham, who was always cross and disagreeable, she was ugly, very ugly, was she not, papa? while good Mrs. Mary is pretty, though not so pretty as I want my governess to be. Yes, all pretty people are good and ugly people are naughty; so I *will* have a *pretty* governess.

The allusion to my mother, and perhaps the compliment to himself, silenced, if they did not convince my too indulgent father; and he determined to write to Mrs. Melville, to send up her daughter, as he wished to engage a governess for his little girl. If Miss Melville suited, she would be retained; and if not, a compensation would be bestowed upon her for the trouble and expense of the journey.

I counted the hours until an answer was received; and shortly after, Miss Melville, attended by her brother, arrived. How my heart palpitated when she was announced! and how I longed to have the deep bonnet and black veil, which, though turned back, still shaded her face, removed,

that I might ascertain if she was indeed *very* pretty.

"Tell her to take off her bonnet, dear papa," whispered I.

"No, not now, my dear," said he, *sotto voce*.

The sound of her voice pleased me, it was low, soft, and clear; and there was a timidity in her manner, that prepossessed me in her favor.

My father kindly desired that her brother might remain in the house, and ordered an apartment to be prepared for him, and good Mrs. Mary was summoned, to conduct Miss Melville to hers.

"Let me go with her," said I, influenced by the curiosity I experienced to behold her face; and taking her hand, I led her up the grand staircase, though good Mrs. Mary was for conducting her by the back stairs. When we had entered the room prepared for her, I scarcely allowed her to remove her gloves before I entreated her to take off her bonnet; nay, I began to untie its strings myself, so impatient was I to examine her face. An exclamation of delight escaped me as I beheld it; for never did a more lovely one meet human gaze. A profusion of chestnut-colored silken ringlets shaded a countenance of exquisite beauty, on which candor and innocence had set their seal, and a figure, slight but of rounded symmetry, was revealed when the large cloak in which it had been enveloped was removed.

Her beautiful face became suffused with blushes as I exclaimed, clapping my hands all the while, "O yes, she is *so* pretty, so very, *very* pretty! Now, I have a nice pretty governess, I never will let her leave me!" and I kissed her affectionately.

I thought, but perhaps it might only be fancy, that good Mrs. Mary did not seem so delighted with my new governess as I expected she would be, for I had already made up my mind that all who loved me, should love her; consequently, I resented this imagined slight to my new favorite.

I left her, while she prepared to change her travelling dress for another, and rushed frantic with joy to my father, vehemently exclaiming, "Oh! dear papa, she is *so* beautiful, *so* very, very beautiful, that I am sure she must be good!"

I was disappointed by the air of indifference with which this information was received; and was disposed to reproach my father with his insensibility; but I observed that he looked more pale and languid than usual, and therefore from an instinct of affection forbore.

Doctor Warminster coming in soon after pronounced that my father had caught a cold, and manifested a feverish tendency; consequently commanded that he should confine himself to his chamber for a day or two, and see no one.

How I hated the doctor for this command! for I had set my heart on astonishing my father by the beauty of Miss Melville, and could not support with common patience, the idea of any postponement of the gratification of my impetuous wishes.

"Perhaps, my dear doctor, you would do me the favor of seeing Miss Melville and her brother," said my father. "You will, in a conversation with her, ascertain whether she is capable of discharging the duties of the situation which I wish her to fill; for, if otherwise, the sooner she knows that she cannot retain it, the less painful will be the loss of it to her."

"I won't have my pretty governess sent away," sobbed I—"I love Miss Melville, and I *will* have her stay with me always."

My father gave a look of helpless languor to the doctor, who in return shrugged up his shoulders, a very favorite movement with him when not pleased, and left the library to see Miss Melville, and report progress.

"I know *he* won't like my pretty governess," said I; "for he wanted me to have an ugly old cross one. I know he did; and I don't like nasty ugly Doctor Warminster, that I don't!"

"Really, my dear Arabella," replied my father, "you are now unjust, and unreasonable. Doctor Warminster has been always kind and attentive, and you grieve me when I see you thus obstinate and ungrateful."

"You grieve me," was the severest reproof I had ever heard from my kind father's lips, and its power over me was omnipotent. It immediately rendered me docile; and, as I kissed him, I promised never again to designate Doctor Warminster, as being "nasty," or "ugly;" two expressions which my father observed were exceedingly unbecoming in the mouth of a young lady.

I counted the minutes impatiently during the doctor's absence. At the end of an hour, however, he returned; and confirmed my report as to the appearance of Miss Melville, by stating it to be, according to his guarded phraseology, "peculiarly prepossessing. But what is more important," continued he, "the young lady appears sensible, modest, intelligent,

and well educated; and, notwithstanding her youth, I hope your lordship will have reason to be satisfied with her. The brother, too, is a well mannered, gentlemanly person, who wishes to enter the church, for which he has been brought up."

My father appeared highly gratified by this account, while I, though greatly pleased at having my favorable impressions relative to my pretty governess confirmed, felt abashed at the consciousness of the injustice I had rendered to Dr. Warminster.

The indisposition of my poor father proved more serious than even his physician had first apprehended. It confined him to his bed-room for above a fortnight, to which I was prohibited more than a daily visit of five minutes' duration, perfect quiet being pronounced essential to his recovery. But even in that limited space I forgot not to repeat the warmest praises of dear, good Miss Melville, omitting the epithet "pretty," which she had requested me never to apply to her.

"But you *are* pretty, prettier than any one," would I say in remonstrance to her request on this subject; "and the truth should always be spoken, papa has often told me."

"We are all formed by the Almighty," would Miss Melville answer; "it is His will, that we should be plain, or otherwise, and we should never attach importance to the matter."

The fortnight of my father's illness being spent entirely with my governess, enabled me to make a rapid progress in learning. Her gentleness, and patient attention, were assisted by my own anxious desire, and I was delighted, when not at my lessons, to be read to by Miss Melville. Though the time passed quickly, and agreeably in my new studies, still I longed for my dear father's convalescence, that I might enjoy his society as well as Miss Melville's and that I might also witness his surprise and pleasure at beholding her. He evinced, however, no desire on this point; on the contrary, he had been some days in the library, and had resumed his ordinary routine of life, and yet he still postponed a compliance with my oft reiterated request to see her.

What he refused to my entreaties, he at length yielded to my tears; and it was agreed that Miss Melville should be invited to the library that evening. I watched, anxiously watched his countenance, as she entered the room. But, to my great surprise and disappointment, I discovered no symptom of the rapturous admiration I had childishly anticipated. His reception of her was polite, nay, kind; and her timidity, which had no rustic awkwardness in it, but evidently arose from native modesty, rendered him still more affable to her.

Vain of the little I had already acquired, I now displayed all my learning to my delighted father, who was as surprised as gratified by my rapid progress.

Two hours fleeted quickly and happily away; Miss Melville was requested to give a list of all the books required for my scholastic pursuits; and politely offered permission to use any works the library contained, for her own perusal. She then left my father's presence, evidently pleased with her reception; and my father seemed no less so with her.

The next day, her brother was received by my father, who, after a long conversation, found him so sensible, and well informed, that he wrote a letter to his friend the Bishop of ———, to recommend him for holy orders; being fully determined to bestow on him a small living in his gift.

This unlooked for good fortune delighted Miss Melville, who devoted every hour, and I may add every thought, to my improvement, which was as rapid as it was gratifying to my father. Our evenings were always spent in the library; where, in a short time, at my request, a pianoforte was installed, from which Miss Melville drew sounds that answer only to a master hand. We soon persuaded her to accompany them with her voice; and it would be difficult to say, whether the father or daughter listened with more pleasure to her dulcet tones.

Having heard my father desire Doctor Warminster to look out for a gentleman to read to him, an hour or two a day, his own sight being too weak to permit his studying without pain, I entreated him to let Miss Melville undertake this office. At first he declined, but at length yielded, as he generally did, to my pertinacious perseverance.

The flexibility, and delicate sweetness of her voice, the distinctness of her enunciation, and the correctness of her style, at once surprised and charmed him. How triumphant was I, at witnessing this effect, though I longed to be able to share this new task with her. Two hours a day were henceforth devoted to this occupation. The books selected had a reference to my studies. History, travels, and belles lettres were perused. I soon learned

to point out, on the map, the different places named in the books, and made no inconsiderable progress in chronology. My mind expanded; every day marked my improvement, and my father witnessed it with gratitude and pleasure. His health, too, appeared to become less delicate, now that he had a constant and cheerful society, and music, which always soothed and cheered him.

Six months flew by, and found me each day more fondly attached to Miss Melville. In her gentle ear was poured every thought of my youthful mind, and on her sympathy did I always count, and never in vain in all my pleasures or pains, and the latter were but "few, and far between." The manner of my dear father towards this charming young woman, was marked by a respectful kindness, that never varied, a kindness as remote from familiarity as from *hauteur*. Hers towards him, was the deferential attention of a modest young woman, who never presumed on his affability, but was anxious to merit a continuance of it. Doctor Warminster soon became one of her warmest friends, and was never tired of commending her to my father.

We were all happy, when a letter arrived, announcing a visit from a maiden aunt of my father, who rarely visited London, but who, when she came, took up her abode at his mansion. Young as I was, I could perceive that this announcement gave him pain; and when he communicated it to Dr. Warminster, the good man shook his head and shrugged his shoulders in a manner that indicated quite as expressively as words could do, that the expected arrival afforded him no satisfaction. I had no recollection of the Lady Theodosia Conningsby, but beholding the impression her intended visit conveyed, I began to form a thousand fancies relative to her. I observed that my father became thoughtful and nervous from the moment her intention of coming was announced, until she made her appearance; and this alteration in him impressed me with no pleasurable anticipations with regard to the cause of it.

Punctual to the hour she had named, Lady Theodosia Conningsby's old fashioned chariot, surmounted by capacious imperials, and high bonnet-cases, rolled to the door. Two ancient servitors, in rich liveries, made in a fashion as obsolete as that of the chariot, slowly descended from the roomy dicky-box, and as slowly assisted their mistress to alight, who, followed by her female attendant, bearing in her arms a lap-dog, entered the house.

When Miss Melville and I were summoned to the library in the evening, we found Lady Theodosia seated *vis-a-vis* to my father, in a large arm-chair. Her appearance was remarkably *outrée*—her dress being that *a-la-mode*, some half a century before. She was tall and extremely thin, her face long and meagre, her nose sharply pointed, her lips thin and descending at the corners, and her chin of inordinate length, and singularly protruded, as if in search of a view of the rest of her face. But her eyes! There is no possibility of rendering justice to them. They were of a light greenish hue, and were so obliquely placed in their sockets that when fixed on one object, she seemed to be regarding some other, in a precisely contrary direction.

In short, her whole appearance would have been considered grotesque, had not an expression of extreme ill-nature and acerbity prevaded every portion of her physiognomy, and the obliquity of her vision increased this repulsive and sinister character.

"Give me leave to present to you Miss Melville," said my father politely—and Miss Melville courtesied to Lady Theodosia, who vouchsafed not the slightest notice in return.

"This is my daughter," continued my father, who had not observed her ladyship's rudeness to my governess. "Arabella, go and welcome Lady Theodosia."

I approached her with reluctance—and she pressed her skinny and parched lips to my forehead. I was for retreating after this salutation, but she sternly told me to remain, that she might examine my face, and see which of the family I most resembled. She drew forth a pair of spectacles, carefully wiped them, placed them astride her nose, and then deliberately surveyed me.

"I think, nephew, that she resembles my grandmother very strongly—don't you agree with me? You, of course, never saw the duchess, but her portrait you must remember. I was considered to bear a very striking family likeness to her."

My poor father, to whom I turned an appealing glance, could with difficulty repress a smile that played about his lips; and Miss Melville looked intently at the carpet to avoid meeting my eyes.

"Arabella has the family nose," continued Lady Theodosia, "yes we all have that feature high and prominent, a beauty pe-

culiar to those of noble and ancient race. The Bourbons all have it. Her eyes, too, are exactly like those of my grandmother. Do you not remember the portrait?"

"I confess the likeness does not strike me," replied my father.

"Whom then *do* you think she resembles?" demanded Lady Theodosia, in an imperious tone.

"Her dear mother," replied my father —and his lip trembled with emotion, as it never failed to do when she was alluded to.

"I see not the slightest likeness," answered she; "on the contrary, I think the child bears a most remarkable family resemblance to *our* family," laying a peculiar emphasis on the word *our*.

My father who detested arguments, refrained from dissenting. But this tacit admission of her opinion by no means satisfied the pertinacious old Lady.

"I perceive, nephew, that you do not agree with me," resumed she.

"I confess we differ," said my father, deprecatingly, "but every eye, you know, varies in its perception on these points."

"No, nephew, I can admit no such fallacy. The eyes must be strange eyes indeed,"—and here she squinted most abominably—"that do not discover that Arabella's are as like those of her grandmother's portrait as it is possible for eyes to be, and bear a strong resemblance to mine,"

"No they don't—do they papa?" exclaimed I—all my incipient vanity wounded by the assertion, and tears starting to the lids of the libelled orbs. A beseeching look from my father, and a terrified one from Miss Melville prevented me from finishing the sentence, which would have been extremely offensive to Lady Theodosia.

"Upon my word I cannot compliment the young person who enacts the part of governess to your daughter, on her pupil's progress in politeness," said Lady Theodosia haughtily and bitterly. "Had you, nephew, engaged Mistress Jefferson, whom I recommended, I think Lady Arabella would have been guilty of no such instance of ill breeding as that to which I have been a disgusted witness."

Miss Melville's cheeks were suffused with blushes, and my poor father felt scarcely less embarrassed at the unfeeling rudeness of his callous and acrimonious aunt.

"May I inquire *why* you did not attend to *my* recommendation, and to whom you are indebted for the young person before me whose extreme juvenility and inexperience render her totally unfit for so grave and important a task?"

Tears now stole down the fair cheeks of Miss Melville, which I observing, immediately ran and embraced her, begging her not to weep at any thing that old cross lady said.

"'Pon my word, this is too bad, nephew," said my aunt angrily; "I never beheld such a spoilt and rude child in my life as your daughter. But this comes of having *young* governesses, who fancy themselves beauties forsooth, and who are, perhaps, encouraged in the erroneous belief by those who have the folly to employ them."

"Really, Lady Theodosia, I must entreat," said my father, agitated beyond measure, "that you will reserve your strictures for another occasion."

"Will your lordship excuse my withdrawing?" said Miss Melville, with that meekness that ever characterised her.

"Pray, by all means let her go—I always think that such persons are wholly out of their place when I see them intruded into the society of their superiors," observed Lady Theodosia.

I followed Miss Melville from the library, leaving my poor dear nervous father to support, as best he might, the continuation of his disagreeable aunt's discussion; and tried all my efforts to soothe Miss Melville, who wept bitterly at the rudeness to which she had been exposed.

When Dr. Warminster came next day, he found my poor father confined to bed, and more indisposed than he had lately been. Miss Melville had been summoned at an early hour of the morning to Lady Theodosia's dressing-room, whence a long lecture from her ladyship sent her back—her cheeks crimsoned, and her eyes bathed in tears. It was at this moment that Doctor Warminster entered the school-room.

"Bless me, bless me, what is the matter?" asked the good man on beholding the agitation of my governess. Sobs and tears were the only answer he received for five or six minutes; but when he had taken from the family medicine chest some sal volatile, and presented a glass of water, into which he had poured a few drops of it, to Miss Melville, she shortly became able to articulate.

"O doctor! you do not—cannot believe —the dreadful reports which Lady Theodosia asserts are circulated relative to me!"

"What reports? I know not even to

what you refer; and I dare be sworn they originate wholly and solely in her ladyship's own brain, always prolific in ill-nature."

"She has said such cruel, cruel things to me, doctor!" and here the poor girl's tears streamed afresh. "Some of them," and she blushed to the very temples, "I could not repeat—they are too dreadful. She declares that my residence beneath the roof of an unmarried man is a gross violation of all decency, that my reputation is destroyed for ever, and that I must leave the house. O doctor! my poor mother—my sisters—my brother—what will they, what can they say, when they hear this dreadful calumny? But they know I am innocent!" and she wept bitterly. I heard no more, for I stole hastily from the apartment, ran to that of my father, and mounting on his bed, threw myself sobbing into his arms, exclaiming—

"Papa! papa! that nasty cross old lady has scolded poor dear Miss Melville, and made her cry, and said she shall not live with you and me. Do, dear papa, send that cross old lady away, and do not let my dear pretty governess leave me!"

My tears gushed plentifully at the dread of losing Miss Melville, and I declared with sobs, that I could not be happy, I could not live, without my own pretty, dear, good governess. My poor father appeared greatly agitated, but Doctor Warminster, who now came to his room, informed him that he had succeeded in soothing the wounded feelings of Miss Melville.

"As your lordship is too much indisposed to bear being harassed by any scene with this very troublesome lady, who has deranged all the comfort of your house, perhaps it would be as well for me to seek an interview with her, and endeavor to make her sensible of the mischief she has caused."

"How kind of you, my dear friend," replied my poor father; "do pray see her, and let me know the result."

In half an hour the doctor returned more discomposed than I thought he could ever have been rendered; for he was habitually a calm, dispassionate man.

"By Jove, my lord," said he, "Lady Theodosia is a perfect she-dragon! She maintains that Miss Melville stands in a relation to your lordship which renders it improper, nay, impossible to countenance her, or submit to remaining beneath the same roof. She has told the poor innocent young lady her opinion, and your lordship may judge its effect. To talk reason to this obstinate old lady is useless; she says that nothing but Miss Melville's leaving the house, and your placing some Mrs. Jefferson in her place, can induce her to believe the young lady not guilty."

"Good heavens! what shameful conduct!" observed my father; "what is to be done?"

"Nothing, that I know of," replied the doctor, "except to let the unmanageable old lady take herself off, and then the house will again be restored to its usual peace."

"I shall write her a few lines," resumed my father; "for it is impossible to let her entertain so erroneous an opinion of Miss Melville."

The note was written—what its contents might be I know not; but the result was that the old fashioned chariot conveyed its mistress and suite next day to the house of another relation; we were relieved from her disagreeable presence.

A timidity, painful to witness, and impossible to dissipate, had now replaced Miss Melville's former gentle gaiety, and easy, yet respectful, manners. In a few days, my father received a letter from his aunt, and another from the female relative with whom she had taken up her abode; and the evident discomposure their perusal produced, proved that they were not of a conciliatory character. But, as he threw them indignantly into the fire, as soon as read, I never had an opportunity of judging whether the epistolary style of Lady Theodosia was as offensive as the conversational.

In a very brief time after this occurrence came Mrs. Melville to reclaim her daughter. She, too, had been written to by Lady Theodosia, and in terms of such insulting reproach, relative to her daughters's supposed position in my father's house, that she immediately thought it necessary to come in person and remove her. My father learnt this intention and the cause with real regret, but I wept in agony and refused to be comforted. The good Doctor Warminster endeavored to reason Mrs. Melville out of the scruples she entertained as to the propriety of leaving her daughter with me, though of the perfect innocence of that daughter she never had a doubt; but he could not prevail on her to alter her determination.

My kind and good father was lavish in his generosity towards mother and daughter; who left the house lamenting the necessity of the measure.

Previous to their departure, and to console me for it, a portrait was taken of Miss Melville. I have treasured it ever since, and even now cannot regard it without an affectionate recollection of the beautiful and amiable original.

Never shall I forget the evening that followed her leaving the house, where her presence had so long diffused cheerfulness. Her pianoforte stood silent, her accustomed chair empty, and her sweet clear voice was no longer heard reading aloud to my father, or gently and affectionately checking my froward impatience. Incessant weeping brought on a violent headache, followed by fever: during the paroxysms of which I continually demanded Miss Melville, my own good, dear, pretty Miss Melville. My father, who anxiously watched over me, listened to my entreaties for my governess with sorrow, but promised, if I would be calm, and do all that Dr. Warminster required, that he would take me into the country as soon as I became well, to see dear Miss Melville. This promise cheered me, and from the moment it was made, I began to get better. I insisted on having her portrait on my bed; how often was the miniature now before me pressed to my feverish lips, and bathed with my tears—and how often did I ask my father to repeat to me his promise that as soon as I was able to travel, we should go to the country to see Miss Melville.

In a fortnight more, we were on our route to Melford, the village where her mother resided, attended by good Doctor Warminster, who did not think me sufficiently strong to forego his care. I could scarcely be kept quiet at the inn, while the doctor went to announce our arrival, and to request that Miss Melville should come to me.

The kind hearted girl burst into tears when she saw my altered face, on which my recent malady had left visible traces; and my father was evidently touched with this proof of her affection for me.

Days stole on, and found us still dwelling in the inn at Melford, my health improving, and my poor father's less suffering than usual. Every allusion to leaving Miss Melville again brought tears to my eyes, and an anxiety that alarmed the fears of my father.

"What is to be done, my good doctor?" asked he one day after an exhibition of my grief at a reference to our departure—"my child cannot be reasoned out of her feelings in the present delicate state of her health. She is my only comfort, my only hope, doctor, the last scion of the family stock; what is to be done? There is no sacrifice I would not make to secure my poor Arabella the society and care of this estimable young lady, but I know not how to accomplish it."

"A mode has occurred to me, my lord," replied the doctor, musingly; "it is a singular one, and I should dread naming it to any person of your lordship's rank, were I not acquainted with the engrossing affection you entertain for your only child; and emboldened by the phrase you lately used, that there was no sacrifice you would not make to secure her the society of Miss Melville. May I proceed, my lord?"

"Certainly, doctor, though I am totally at a loss to imagine what sacrifice can secure the object we wish to obtain."

"Your lordship is aware, but probably not to the full extent, for the young lady in question, and her mother, with that delicacy which characterises them, have concealed it as much as possible, of the injury inflicted on their feelings, and on Miss Melville's reputation, by the slanderous reports circulated relative to her position in your lordship's family, by Lady Theodosia Conningsby."

"Yes, doctor, too well do I know it; for, from my female relations, whose *protegées* I have refused to accept as governesses, have I received letters of recrimination caused by the evil reports to which you allude."

"Has it never occurred to your lordship, how Miss Melville's presence beneath your roof might be secured without a possibility of scandal—*not* as Miss Melville, but as a married lady—in short, my lord, as Countess of Walsingham!"

"Good God, doctor! you have taken me quite by surprise. No, I never thought of such a possibility. The affection I entertained for Arabella's mother, always precluded the thought of giving her a successor in my heart, or in my house. My health, too, is so extremely delicate, as you are aware, that I stand more in need of a nurse than of a wife."

"But why might not your lordship find the best of all nurses in a wife? and, surely, a more gentle and amiable companion could not be found than Miss Melville. I observed how much her society solaced your solitude when she was beneath your roof, and what a gloom her absence occasioned. But in the present case, we are to consider the happiness of your daughter, as you so will it, even more

than your own; and as that appears to depend on the society of this young lady, it is for your lordship to reflect whether you will, or will not, secure this advantage for her, by the only means in your power."

The result of this conversation, which the good doctor repeated to me many years after, was, that he was commissioned by my father, to make proposals of marriage to Miss Melville; who, much to her honor, though truly grateful, was by no means dazzled by them; nay, only yielded, at length, to the repeated representations of the doctor, that my health would, in its present delicate state, inevitably fall a sacrifice to a separation from her, to whom I was so fondly attached.

The marriage shortly after took place: and never had my father cause to repent it; for Lady Walsingham devoted her whole time to the duties of her new situation, and proved the truest, gentlest friend to him, and the most affectionate guide and monitress to me.

We went abroad for some years, visited the South of France and Italy; from the mild climate of which my father's health derived considerable benefit. But his wishes pointing to home, we returned to England, and having spent some months at Walsingham Castle, we took up our abode in London, that I might have the advantage of masters in finishing my studies.

And now it was that the malignity of my father's female relations manifested itself by every means in their power. Cards from each of them were left at his door, inscribed for *me*, lest, by any chance, the mistress of the mansion should imagine them to be intended for her. Lady Theodosia Walsingham had spared neither time nor trouble in propagating the most injurious reports against the wife of her nephew, whom she every where represented as an artful, designing young adventuress, who had first seduced her poor, unhappy, weak-minded nephew, and then inveigled him into marriage. I was stated to be a victim to the tyranny of my stepmother, and my father was said to be the slave of her will.

The acquaintances to whom these falsehoods were repeated, were not slow in giving them circulation. My mother's family were apprised of them, and never having ceased to feel the wound their pride had received, from the selection of a governess as a successor to a scion of their aristocratic race, they lent a ready credence to every disadvantageous rumor relative to Lady Walsingham.

I became an object of general interest to the female members of both families, who, during the period of my father's widowhood, had never evinced the slightest anxiety about me. Letters were written to my father by them, requesting that I might be permitted to visit them occasionally. He would have returned a haughty and decided negative to such requests, for he felt indignant at the implied insult offered to his excellent wife, but she entreated so urgently, that I might be suffered to go to them, that he at length yielded to her wishes. The good Dr. Warminster, too, advised a compliance, giving for reason that a refusal would only serve as a confirmation to the evil reports in circulation.

Never shall I forget the first visit I paid. I was then in my twelfth year, but from having always associated only with persons arrived at maturity, my mind was more formed than that of most children of that age. It was to the Marchioness of Rocktower, the aunt of my mother, that this first visit was paid; a cold, stately, formal being, who looked as if she had been born an old lady, and never had passed through the gradations of infancy, or girlhood. She kissed my forehead, examined my features, and protested that she was glad to find I so strongly resembled my poor dear mother —"Yes, I was a perfect Oranville, there was no mistaking the family likeness. How is it that you are alone, my dear?" she then added.

"I wanted mamma to come with me," answered I; "but she would not."

"What! do you call *her*, mamma!"

"Oh! yes, ever since she has been Lady Walsingham."

"I wonder they did not exact the epithet before," murmured she spitefully. "And have you no governess, Arabella?"

"Mamma is my governess; she teaches me all my lessons, except dancing, music, and drawing, and for these I have masters."

I forgot to state, that the Marchioness had a lady present at this interview, to whom she turned with significant glances, at each of my responses to the queries put to me; and who replied to them with an ominous shake of the head, or a murmur between a sigh and a groan.

"And who stays with you while you take your lessons?" resumed Lady Rocktower.

"Mamma. I always have my masters

early in the morning, before papa is up, and mamma rises early to be present."

The two ladies exchanged mournful glances and sighed aloud.

"Poor child!" ejaculated the Marchioness; and "Poor child!" echoed her companion.

"And who came with you in the carriage here; for you surely were not suffered to come alone?"

"Mamma came with me to the door, and I so wished her to come in! but she would not," answered I, artlessly.

"How mean! how unworthy! what a want of spirit! to come to a door, which she knows never shall be open to her," broke forth the Marchioness.

"Yes, very mean, quite dreadful!" repeated the other lady, piously casting up her eyes to the ceiling.

"Who is mean and dreadful!" asked I, with a strong suspicion that these insulting terms, though totally inapplicable, were by them meant to apply to Lady Walsingham.

"You must not ask questions, my dear," replied the Marchioness; "it is very rude and ill-bred to do so."

"Yes, very rude and ill-bred," repeated her echo.

"Are you very happy at home? Speak the truth, you may tell *me;* I am, you know, your own aunt, my poor dear child."

"I always speak the truth," answered I, reddening with indignation. "Mamma taught me always to speak the truth."

"It quite wounds my feelings, to hear her call that person, mamma," said Lady Rocktower. "Oh! if my lost niece could have imagined it, she who loved *him* so much! It is indeed dreadful to think of the selfishness of men."

"Very dreadful!" repeated the other lady.

"But you have not told me whether you are happy at home, my poor child," whined Lady Rocktower, with a piteous face, and a dolorous tone of voice; prematurely prepared to condole on the confession of misery, which her malice had imagined.

"Happy?" repeated I. "Oh, ever so happy!"

"Poor child! she is told to say this," exclaimed Lady Rocktower, in a voice that was meant to be a whisper, but which, owing to her deafness, was louder than she intended.

"Doubtless she is!" groaned her friend, again casting her eyes up to the group of painted Cupids on the ceiling; who seemed maliciously to smile at the antiquated dames beneath.

"I was *not* told to say so," cried I, angrily; "I always speak the truth—I *am* happy at home, and have a fond, kind papa and mamma;" and tears came into my eyes.

The two ladies exchanged glances again, which glances seemed to say that one of them had gone too far in her comments.

"I only meant, my love, that all children, who have had the misfortune to lose a mother, that is, an *own*, real mother, cannot be so happy as—as if they had *not* lost her," said my grand aunt, trying with all her might to look mournful.

"Yes, they cannot be so happy as if they had *not* lost her," echoed the toady.

"But you, I suppose," resumed the Marchioness, "do not at all remember your *own* mother; you, unhappy child, were so young when she died. What a dreadful blow that was to me!"

"A dreadful blow, indeed," groaned the echo.

"I wrote to offer to go to Walsingham Castle, to nurse her during her last illness though at that period I was anxiously watching the progress of Mr. Vernon's, the celebrated oculist, treatment of the cataract in the eyes of my poor dear Jacko; a treatment which, alas! terminated so fatally. The poor dear creature sank under it! That was, indeed, a heavy affliction."

"Yes, a very heavy affliction, indeed," responded the parasite.

"Who was Jacko?" asked I.

"What! did you never hear your father speak of Jacko?" demanded Lady Rocktower, in a tone of the utmost surprise.

"Never," answered I.

"What hearts some people have!" groaned her ladyship.

"What hearts indeed!" repeated her companion.

"Mrs. Lancaster, be so good as to bring me the miniature of my niece; it is on the table in my dressing-room, and bring, also, the portrait of my poor dear Jacko, which is by it."

Mrs. Lancaster bustled off with an activity really surprising for one of her years and unwieldly size; and quickly returned with the picture.

"Look here, my dear," said Lady Rocktower; "this is the portrait of your lovely lost mother. I dare say you never saw her picture before."

"I have one just like this, in a locket,"

answered I, "with mamma's hair at the back, and I see her portrait every day in the library, and in the drawing-room."

"How unfeeling!" interrupted Lady Rocktower; which was, like all her phrases echoed.

"And I have a large picture of her in my school-room," resumed I proudly, "which my second mamma had hung up there for me."

"How artful!" murmured the Marchioness.

"How artful!" reiterated Mrs. Lancaster.

"What is artful!" demanded I.

"You must not ask questions, it is very ill-bred to do so," was the reply of my grand aunt, and, "Yes very ill-bred indeed," was again murmured from the lips of her companion. The portrait of Jacko was not in the place where it was supposed to have been; and I did not request Lady Rocktower to have it sought for, lest I should be told that I was ill-bred.

At length, the carriage was announced; and I bade farewell to my grand aunt, leaving, probably, as unfavorable an impression of me on her mind, as mine retained of her. I scarcely need add, that I received no more invitations to visit her, for her curiosity had been satisfied, and her malevolence disappointed.

What a relief did it seem to throw myself into Lady Walsingham's arms, which I did the moment I entered the carriage.

"Oh! dear mamma, never send me to see that disagreeable old lady any more. I don't like her at all, indeed I don't; nor the other fat old woman that repeats every word that Lady Rocktower says."

How affectionate were the tones, in which I was told that I must never dislike any one, but more especially my relations; and how firmly, but gently, was I checked, when I commenced repeating the questions that were asked of me, and the comments that were so improperly made in my presence. Young as I was, an impression that Lady Rocktower disliked my stepmother, had taken possession of my mind; and I resented it, by entertaining for her ladyship a similar sentiment.

My father, though he questioned me not, checked not my communications relative to this visit, when mamma was absent from the library; and embraced me fondly when he heard my artless remarks, all so indicative of my grateful affection for Lady Walsingham.

"Who was Jacko, papa," asked I, "of whom Lady Rocktower was so fond?"

"A huge monkey, and by far the most detestable animal I ever had the misfortune to come in contact with," was the answer. "He once bit my hand severely, because I prevented him from attacking you, when your nurse took you to my aunt's; and she was highly indignant at my chastising him, seeming to think her monkey of much more importance than my child."

This anecdote completed my dislike of her ladyship, which not even the bequest of her fortune to me some ten years after, could eradicate.

When I visited the female relatives on the paternal side, they all, and each discovered that I was exceedingly like my father's family. I was, as they asserted, a true Walsingham, and not at all like my mother's family, which they seemed to consider as a piece of singular good fortune.

My father having heard from me the observation made by Lady Rocktower of the meanness, the unworthiness of driving to a door that would never open to receive the presumptuous loiterer on the outside of it, fully understood its malice; and prohibited Lady Wlsinagham from accompanying me on any of my future visits. Her female attendant, a most respectable young person, far superior to the generality of *femmes de chambre*, ever afterwards escorted me on these occasions; and I then heard not a few comments on the insolence and pride of some people, who so soon forget themselves, that they forsooth were too fine to continue to enact the parts, by the performance of which, they had elevated themselves from their original obscurity.

Never did I observe a single symptom of pique or discontent evince itself in my amiable stepmother, at the conduct of my father's relatives. The fulfilment of her duties appeared to be the source whence her enjoyments were derived. The comfort of my father, and the improvement and happiness of myself, were the constant objects of her attention: and such was the sweetness of her temper, and the winning gentleness and cheerfulness of her manners, that her society diffused a general happiness.

Time rolled on: and at the period I completed my sixteenth year, no where could be found a family more fondly united; or, between the members of which, a better understanding invariably subsisted. Her brother was the only member of her family who frequented our house; for she, with a

delicate perception of my poor father's dislike to an extensive circle of visitors, never obtruded her relations upon him; though her correspondence with, and presents to them, were frequent.

A liberal provision had been made for them, by my father on his marriage; and her brother, who was now in possession of the living which had accrued to him through the same source, was, I have stated, an occasional inmate of our mansion, whenever his duties permitted his absence from his flock. Nature never formed a finer model of manly beauty, than Frederick Melville, and the heart was worthy of the shrine. His presence never failed to bestow increased cheerfulness on our family party. My father entertained a strong partiality for him, which was displayed in many a costly gift despatched to the parsonage, as well as in the marked gratification his society conferred. Lady Walsingham loved him, as only a sister can love an only brother, ere she has experienced a warmer, and less pure attachment; and I—loved him, with all the wild idolatry of a passionate heart, now first awakened from its childish slumber, yet still unconscious of the nature of the sentiment that animated it.

Many are those of my sex, who might have passed the first years of youth, without a knowledge of the passion they more frequently *imagine* than *feel*, had they not acquired its rudiments from female companions, or the perusal of novels; somewhat in the same manner as hypochondriacs suppose themselves to experience the diseases of which they either hear or read. The ephemeral fancies, young ladies dignify with the appellation of love, no more resemble the real sentiment, than do the imaginary maladies resemble those for which they are mistaken: but the effects of both are equally dangerous. Many a girl has madly rushed into a marriage, believing herself as madly in love, who has had to deplore her infatuation through a long life of consequent penance; and many a *malade imaginaire* has sunk under the real results of a supposed visionary disease.

Mine was not a precocious passion forced into life by such unhealthy or extraneous excitements. I had never read of, or conversed on the subject, till long after its wild dreams haunted my pillow, and its engrossing tenderness filled my heart. Well do I remember the suffering I endured, when Frederick Melville first began to replace the unceremonious familiarity with which he had been wont to treat me, during my childhood, by a more reserved, and deferential manner. Filled with alarm, I demanded of Lady Walsingham how I had offended her brother, for he no longer behaved to me as formerly?

"Remember, my dear Arabella, that you are no longer a child," replied she; "and that therefore he would err, if he continued to treat you as one."

I felt a gleam of pleasure at this acknowledgment of my being no longer a child. The truth was, I had never been treated as one, consequently no change was visible in the manners of those with whom I lived; hence, I was not as sensible of my approach to womanhood, as those young persons are, who impatiently await their emancipation from the nursery school-room, and its roast mutton and rice pudding dinners.

"I am sure," said I, and the tears filled my eyes, "if people cease to like me, or to show their affection, because I am no longer a child, I shall regret my infancy, and wish to resume it. But *you* have not changed your manner towards me, neither has my father; why then should Mr. Melville? I am sure, dear mother, though your good nature prompts you to conceal the fact, that this change in his manner has occurred because he no longer likes me as he did."

And my tears flowed afresh.

The anxiety Lady Walsingham's countenance displayed, though she endeavored to disguise it, convinced me that my suspicions were well founded, and increased my sorrow, in spite of all her efforts to reason me out of it.

When we met at dinner, I remarked that her eyes bore evident traces of tears. Frederick too, looked more grave than I had ever seen him; and my poor father, in general, the least talkative of the little circle, was now the most so. He proposed music in the evening, to which we assented, though little disposed; and I played an accompaniment while Lady Walsingham and her brother sang one of my father's favorite *duos*. The tones of his voice, seemed to sink into my very soul; low, plaintive, and full of rich melody, their deep pathos excited anew the tenderness, already but too much developed in my heart.

The sister and brother sang only sacred music, to which they had been accustomed from infancy; and their voices were in such perfect harmony, that even the most fastidious critic would have lis-

tened to them with delight. For me, no other voices ever possessed the same charm; and I thought I had never heard them breathe forth sounds of such exquisite and softened melancholy, as on that memorable night.

The *duo* ended, they paused to hear the accustomed request to repeat it—a minute elapsed—yet no word escaped the lips that had been wont to applaud them.

"Hush! he sleeps," whispered my mother, gently approaching with stealthy steps the easy chair in which my father reclined; but no sooner had she reached it, than a shriek of horror burst from her lips, and she fell insensible at his feet.

We rushed to the spot—oh God! never shall I forget the agony of that moment! Even now, after the lapse of more than half a century, the scene seems present to my imagination.

My father, my dear, kind, indulgent father, was a corse!—the vital spark was extinct for ever, and his gentle spirit had passed away without a groan. Though years, long years, have since elapsed, leaving many a furrow on my brow, and inflicting many a pang on my heart, that fearful evening has never been effaced from my memory. Then was the golden veil of youth, that had lent to life its brightness first rudely rent asunder. Then came, for the first time, the soul-harrowing conviction of the uncertainty of life, and the brevity of its blessings; a conviction that destroys the confidence in happiness, which forms so considerable a part of the happiness itself Alas! the dear object of so much affection was now a cold and lifeless corse! snatched from us without a word of warning, without even a farewell look. I could not at first believe the fatal truth. No! he could not be gone for ever—he could not thus have left us; and I clasped my arms around the neck which they had so often entwined, and pressed my lips to that dear face, calling him by every fond and tender name to which my frantic affection could give utterance; until, exhausted by my agony, I sank, powerless as an infant, into the arms of my attendant, and lost, in temporary insensibility, my sense of the overwhelming affliction that had befallen me.

Never shall I forget the awaking from that sleep: the dim, vague recollection of some terrible event, slowly making itself understood to my bewildered mind; then, the shudder of intense agony, with which the fatal truth stood revealed, and the unutterable pangs which it renewed in me. No! such a lesson, though only one among many of those which all must learn, can never be effaced from my mind.

The shock had produced a nervous fever, under which I languished for several days, totally helpless; yet, with a full, an overpowering consciousness of the loss I had experienced. Lady Walsingham never left my bed side. Hers was the gentle hand that smoothed my pillow, and gave the cooling beverage to my fevered lips; hers was the sweet voice that whispered mild entreaties to me to be comforted, even while the tremulousness of its tones betrayed how little she had acquired the difficult task of conquering her own grief.

Doctor Warminster attended me through this malady, with an affectionate interest never surpassed; all the friendship he had so long entertained for my lost parent, seemed transferred to my stepmother and self; and our chief source of consolation was derived from the assurance he so frequently gave us, that the life of the dear departed had been prolonged far beyond the doctor's hopes, by the calm and cheerful mode in which it had been passed, owing to the indefatigable care, and delicate attentions, of all those around him.

My poor father had a disease of one of the arteries of the heart, which had declared itself soon after my birth; and any sudden or violent emotion might have produced a fatal result at any moment. This was the cause of his sedentary existence and had eventually terminated it; but the awful fiat found him in readiness to meet it. For years he knew, that though in the midst and zenith of life, he might be instantaneously summoned to leave it; and he prepared himself for the event with the calmness of a philosopher, and the resignation of a Christian. Now it was that I first learned that an imprudent disclosure of his disease, made to my poor mother by Lady Theodosia Walsingham, shortly after her last accouchment of a son, who lived but a few hours, and had given her such a shock as to lead to a total derangement of health, which conducted her to the grave, in a few months. Dr. Warminster feared then, that the extreme grief of my poor father would occasion his death. But the dying entreaties of my mother, that he would not give way to regret, but live for their child, triumphed over the selfish indulgence of his sorrow; though

he never ceased to remember her, whose dread of losing him, had consigned her to an early grave.

He determined to do all that could prolong life for my sake; and, contrary to a resolution formed over the death-bed of my mother, never to give her a successor, married to secure me the society of Miss Melville, when he found it was considered essential to my happiness. Never was a husband and father more sincerely mourned, than was my dear parent; and never did a human being more deserve to be lamented!

The first time I left my room after this sad catastrophe, my mind softened by grief, and my frame weakened by illness, I saw Frederick Melville. He, too, had deeply shared the general regret, for he was truly attached to his patron; and the awful suddenness of the blow rendered it more painful. When he took my hand his own trembled; and the extreme palor of my face, seemed to shock him.

"You will not now be cold and distant to me, Frederick," said I, while tears streamed down my cheeks, "when I have no longer any one but my mother and you to love me."

He pressed my hand gently, and assured me, that he had never felt otherwise than warmly interested in my happiness; and that I wronged him, if I doubted his affectionate friendship. These words reassured me—for how little does it require to nourish hope in a youthful breast?—and the softened kindness of his manner, even still more than his words, tranquillised my feelings.

My dear father had bequeathed a handsome competency to each member of the Melville family, and a large dower to Lady Walsingham, who, with her brother, was named my guardian. The unentailed estastes, and personal property to a large amount, were willed to me, charged with provisions to the old servants, and a considerable bequest to good Doctor Warminster. A thousand vague hopes sprang up in my mind at finding I was thus in a manner linked with Frederick Melville. I was pleased at being, for more than four years, as it were, dependent on him, and felt that I would gladly prolong the dependence for life.

"You are now one of the richest heiresses in England, my lady," said good Mrs. Mary to me one day, presuming that her long services licensed her to be more communicative than English servants generally are. "Your ladyship will marry some great rich lord, I am sure, and perhaps I may see you a duchess."

"You will see no such thing, I can tell you," answered I, angry even at the supposition. "I am already rich, and of ancient family. Why, then, should I marry for the ridiculous purpose of obtaining that which I already possess? Why may I not marry to please myself, and so make some one I love, rich and distinguished?"

"Lord, my lady, sure your ladyship would never go to demean yourself by marrying some one as is not somebody. Every rich and grand lady likes to marry some one that is richer and grander than herself, if possible; for *then* she can be sure she is married for *real* love; whereas, my lady, if she marries one as is a nobody, she can never know but what he married her only *because* she *was* a great and rich lady—and that thought would be very vexatious to a woman's mind."

I stole a glance at the mirror opposite, and the face I there beheld told me that *I* might hope to be loved for myself, even though I was a rich heiress. I suppose good Mrs. Mary, who wanted none of the sagacity of her sex and class, guessed what was passing in my mind, for she immediately added,

"To be sure, when ladies are as handsame as your ladyship, they will always be sure to have lovers in plenty, even if they had no fortune; but still, if I was a great rich heiress, though ever so beautiful, I would be afraid to marry a poor gentleman, from the notion that afterwards the suspicion would be coming into my head that my money had some share in making him propose for me."

Mean and unworthy as this thought was, a thought that never would have entered my head, had it not been presented through the medium of Mrs. Mary, it now made a disagreeable impression on me, and I began to think that to be "a great rich heiress," as Mary called it, was not after all, so desirable a position as I had been disposed to think it. How much evil finds access to youthful minds through conversing with servants; the very best of whom are, by the want of education, and the narrowness of their ideas, totally incapacitated from communicating other than mean and selfish thoughts.

I now began to look on myself as one who would be an object of general attraction, and I became inflated with pride; but there was something so peculiarly dignified, as well as gentle, in the manners of

Lady Walsingham and her brother that no opportunity of evincing this new defect offered. Nothing could exceed the affectionate attention of my stepmother; it seemed rather increased than diminished since the melancholy change in our family, as if she would repay to his child the debt of gratitude she owed to my father.

The conduct of Frederick was uniformly kind; but still there was a degree of reserve, if not coldness, in it, that was far from satisfactory to me. He had prolonged his stay at the earnest desire of his sister; but the period now drew near when he must return to his living, and I counted the days in which I had yet to enjoy his society, as those only count them who love for the first time. Lady Walsingham had a portrait taken of him by an eminent artist, who succeeded in rendering it an admirable likeness. The morning on which it was sent home, that desire to speak of the object of our affection, which is one of the peculiar characteristics of the passion that had obtained possession of my young heart, tempted me to ask Mrs. Mary whether she had seen Mr. Melville's picture!

"Yes, my lady, I have; and extremely like it is. Mr. Melville is a very handsome gentleman," (and she looked narrowly at me,) "and much resembles Lady Walsingham. I was sure her ladyship would have his picture taken."

"Why so, Mistress Mary?" asked I.

"Oh don't you remember, my lady, how her ladyship, that is, before she was her ladyship, or perhaps ever expected to be, when she was going away back to her mother's had her picture taken and left with your ladyship?"

"Yes, I remember very well; it was I who made her sit for it."

"Well, then, my lady, if that picture had *not* been made, I think your ladyship would have got used to Miss Melville's absence; you would not have had that bad illness; my poor dear lord would not have taken you down to the country, nor have married my lady. It all came of that picture."

And here, good Mistress Mary put on a most lugubrious countenance, and sighed deeply.

"I shall always rejoice then, at having had the picture made," answered I, more than half offended at the implied censure Mistress Mary's observations and sigh conveyed. "But what can all this gossipping of yours have to do with Mr. Melville's portrait?"

"Why, your ladyship must be conscious that as the brother is as handsome as the sister, some rich young lady may see the picture; then, perhaps, see *him*; then, fall in love with, and marry him; so that he may have as much good luck as my Lady Walsingham had."

I felt my cheeks glow at this palpable insinuation; I was angry with Mary for presuming to convey it, and yet, unworthy as I was, I fancied that the portrait *might* have been taken with an intention of keeping his image before me. Strange as it may appear, I wished Frederick Melville to love me, ah, passionately wished it; desired too, that he would demand my hand, and yet I desired to find in him that consciousness of the difference between our positions, which should render his love so timid as to require an act of heroic generosity on my part, to give him the hand he fondly aspired to, but dared not demand. A whole romance was formed in my head, though as yet I had never perused one; but love is a magician that can work strange marvels.

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, good Mistress Mary was fidgetting about my dressing-table, anxious to resume the subject, which my abstraction had interrupted.

"I would not be at all surprised, my lady," commenced Mary, "if some rich heiress were to fall in love with Mr. Melville; for he is indeed as handsome a gentleman as ever I saw," (I felt better disposed towards her,) "and so sensible and steady too. Well, all I hope is that if such a thing should happen, it will take place before he has ever been in love with any one else; for it's a cruel thing, my lady, to have either man or woman crossed in love. And though people may be tempted by grandeur and riches to give up their first sweetheart, still they must have an unhappy mind whenever they think of it: and some persons do say, but, for God's sake, your ladyship, don't go for to get me into trouble by repeating it—they do say that Lady Walsingham broke the heart of as handsome a young gentleman as any in Sussex, to marry my poor dear lord."

"Is it possible!" demanded I, forgetting in my awakened curiosity the indecorum I was committing, in thus questioning a servant, relative to the widow of my father, the kindest, truest friend, save him, I ever knew.

"Oh! indeed, my lady, it's all true; I saw the young gentleman myself when we were down staying at Cuckfield, looking

he never ceased to remember her, whose dread of losing him, had consigned her to an early grave.

He determined to do all that could prolong life for my sake; and, contrary to a resolution formed over the death-bed of my mother, never to give her a successor, married to secure me the society of Miss Melville, when he found it was considered essential to my happiness. Never was a husband and father more sincerely mourned, than was my dear parent; and never did a human being more deserve to be lamented!

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"You are now one of the richest heiresses in England, my lady," said good Mrs. Mary to me one day, presuming that her long services licensed her to be more communicative than English servants generally are. "Your ladyship will marry some great rich lord, I am sure, and perhaps I may see you a duchess."

"You will see no such thing, I can tell you," answered I, angry even at the supposition. "I am already rich, and of ancient family. Why, then, should I marry for the ridiculous purpose of obtaining that which I already possess? Why may I not marry to please myself, and so make some one I love, rich and distinguished?"

"Lord, my lady, sure your ladyship would never go to demean yourself by marrying some one as is not somebody. Every rich and grand lady likes to marry some one that is richer and grander than herself, if possible; for *then* she can be sure she is married for *real* love; whereas, my lady, if she marries one as is a nobody, she can never know but what he married her only *because* she *was* a great and rich lady—and that thought would be very vexatious to a woman's mind."

I stole a glance at the mirror opposite, and the face I there beheld told me that *I* might hope to be loved for myself, even though I was a rich heiress. I suppose good Mrs. Mary, who wanted none of the sagacity of her sex and class, guessed what was passing in my mind, for she immediately added,

"To be sure, when ladies are as handsame as your ladyship, they will always be sure to have lovers in plenty, even if they had no fortune; but still, if I was a great rich heiress, though ever so beautiful, I would be afraid to marry a poor gentleman, from the notion that afterwards the suspicion would be coming into my head that my money had some share in making him propose for me."

Mean and unworthy as this thought was, a thought that never would have entered my head, had it not been presented through the medium of Mrs. Mary, it now made a disagreeable impression on me, and I began to think that to be "a great rich heiress," as Mary called it, was not after all, so desirable a position as I had been disposed to think it. How much evil finds access to youthful minds through conversing with servants; the very best of whom are, by the want of education, and the narrowness of their ideas, totally incapacitated from communicating other than mean and selfish thoughts.

I now began to look on myself as one who would be an object of general attraction, and I became inflated with pride; but there was something so peculiarly dignified, as well as gentle, in the manners of

Lady Walsingham and her brother that no opportunity of evincing this new defect offered. Nothing could exceed the affectionate attention of my stepmother; it seemed rather increased than diminished since the melancholy change in our family, as if she would repay to his child the debt of gratitude she owed to my father.

The conduct of Frederick was uniformly kind; but still there was a degree of reserve, if not coldness, in it, that was far from satisfactory to me. He had prolonged his stay at the earnest desire of his sister; but the period now drew near when he must return to his living, and I counted the days in which I had yet to enjoy his society, as those only count them who love for the first time. Lady Walsingham had a portrait taken of him by an eminent artist, who succeeded in rendering it an admirable likeness. The morning on which it was sent home, that desire to speak of the object of our affection, which is one of the peculiar characteristics of the passion that had obtained possession of my young heart, tempted me to ask Mrs. Mary whether she had seen Mr. Melville's picture?

"Yes, my lady, I have; and extremely like it is. Mr. Melville is a very handsome gentleman," (and she looked narrowly at me,) "and much resembles Lady Walsingham. I was sure her ladyship would have his picture taken."

"Why so, Mistress Mary?" asked I.

"Oh don't you remember, my lady, how her ladyship, that is, before she was her ladyship, or perhaps ever expected to be, when she was going away back to her mother's had her picture taken and left with your ladyship?"

"Yes, I remember very well; it was I who made her sit for it."

"Well, then, my lady, if that picture had *not* been made, I think your ladyship would have got used to Miss Melville's absence; you would not have had that bad illness; my poor dear lord would not have taken you down to the country, nor have married my lady. It all came of that picture."

And here, good Mistress Mary put on a most lugubrious countenance, and sighed deeply.

"I shall always rejoice then, at having had the picture made," answered I, more than half offended at the implied censure Mistress Mary's observations and sigh conveyed. "But what can all this gossipping of yours have to do with Mr. Melville's portrait?"

"Why, your ladyship must be conscious that as the brother is as handsome as the sister, some rich young lady may see the picture; then, perhaps, see *him*; then, fall in love with, and marry him; so that he may have as much good luck as my Lady Walsingham had."

I felt my cheeks glow at this palpable insinuation; I was angry with Mary for presuming to convey it, and yet, unworthy as I was, I fancied that the portrait *might* have been taken with an intention of keeping his image before me. Strange as it may appear, I wished Frederick Melville to love me, ah, passionately wished it; desired too, that he would demand my hand, and yet I desired to find in him that consciousness of the difference between our positions, which should render his love so timid as to require an act of heroic generosity on my part, to give him the hand he fondly aspired to, but dared not demand. A whole romance was formed in my head, though as yet I had never perused one; but love is a magician that can work strange marvels.

While these thoughts were passing in my mind, good Mistress Mary was fidgetting about my dressing-table, anxious to resume the subject, which my abstraction had interrupted.

"I would not be at all surprised, my lady," commenced Mary, "if some rich heiress were to fall in love with Mr. Melville; for he is indeed as handsome a gentleman as ever I saw," (I felt better disposed towards her,) "and so sensible and steady too. Well, all I hope is that if such a thing should happen, it will take place before he has ever been in love with any one else; for it's a cruel thing, my lady, to have either man or woman crossed in love. And though people may be tempted by grandeur and riches to give up their first sweetheart, still they must have an unhappy mind whenever they think of it: and some persons do say, but, for God's sake, your ladyship, don't go for to get me into trouble by repeating it—they do say that Lady Walsingham broke the heart of as handsome a young gentleman as any in Sussex, to marry my poor dear lord."

"Is it possible?" demanded I, forgetting in my awakened curiosity the indecorum I was committing, in thus questioning a servant, relative to the widow of my father, the kindest, truest friend, save him, I ever knew.

"Oh! indeed, my lady, it's all true; I saw the young gentleman myself when we were down staying at Cuckfield, [illegible]

even then as pale as a sheet, and Mrs. Bateman as keeps the George Inn, told me the whole story."

"But, perhaps, Mary, Lady Walsingham never loved the young gentleman you saw, though he was in love with her."

"Lord bless your heart, my lady, the whole village knew as how they were sweethearts, and engaged to be married, and as loving as two turtle doves. But when Miss Melville come to London, and seed this fine house, and all the grandeur of being a lady, she took to pleasing your ladyship so much that your little ladyship couldn't abide no body else; and pleased, too, his poor dear lordship, as is no more, till he thought there was no one like her. And then, when she pleased your ladyship and his lordship, until neither of ye could live without her, then she gets that beautiful picture taken; and off she goes, guessing pretty well, I'll be sworn, that she'd be soon sent for to come back. And so Mrs. Bateman said, when I told her all about her pleasing my lord and my little lady so much, and about the picture."

Mistress Mary's tongue, thus encouraged, ran on glibly, and I was in no humor to check it. The truth is, though I blush, old as I am, while making this avowal, the artful tale thus related, had made an impression on me.

"And so, my lady," continued Mary, "Mrs. Bateman says to me, 'Mistress Mary,' says she, 'it may be all very well for Miss Melville to be made a countess, and to walk in the coronation with a gold crown on her head, side by side, cheek by jowl, as the saying is, with the grandest in all England. But will *that* comfort her, when she knows the green grass is growing over the grave of her true love, who died all for her marrying another? Oh! Mistress Mary,' says Mrs. Bateman, '*I* know what it is to cross a first love, for all you would not think it now, because I'm so changed: but when Mister Bateman came a courting to me, there was another lad, a widow's son, with whom I had broken a tester, and taken many a moonlight walk.' "

A summons from Lady Walsingham interrupted the sequel of Mrs. Bateman's love story, to the evident discomposure of its narrator, who appeared unconscious how little interest the adventures of the hostess of the George Inn excited in my mind.

"I sent for you, dear Arabella," said my stepmother, "to consult you about a change I wish to be made in Frederick's portrait. It looks too cold, too severe, and I should like the expression to be softened. What do you think?"

Trifling as this appeal to me was, it bore such a curious coincidence with Mrs. Mary's observations and surmises, that it struck me as being a convincing proof of their justice; and I felt chilled, if not disgusted, by this seeming cunning. Wayward and wicked that I was! to allow the low suspicions of a menial to prejudice me against one whose whole conduct towards me and my father, aught to have left no room in my breast for ought save implicit confidence and boundless gratitude! But such is the inherent evil of some natures, that an ill founded assertion, even from an unworthy source, can efface the remembrance of years of experienced goodness.

"You do not tell me what you think, Arabella," resumed Lady Walsingham, as I stood, lost in abstraction.

"I like the picture very well as it is at present," answered I, somewhat coldly, "and your brother, as a clergyman, ought not to look as gay as a fine gentleman."

"You mistake, my dear Arabella," rejoined Lady Walsingham, "I do not wish the portrait to look gay; *that* would not be in character with the profession of the original; but a soft gravity, that is, a seriousness, devoid of severity, would please me better."

"Did you ever see so handsome a young man as your brother, mother?" asked I, urged by an instinct of irrepressible curiosity; and I looked steadfastly and scrutinisingly in her face.

She positively turned as pale as marble, faltered for a moment, and then answered—

"Your interrogation is strange; but I did once know a young man whom I thought quite as handsome;" and she sighed deeply.

"Who was he, may I inquire?" asked I.

"He was a neighbor of ours in Sussex," replied Lady Walsingham, "but he is now no more."

The ashy paleness of her face, ought to have silenced my unfeeling curiosity; but it did not.

"When did he die, mother?" again demanded I.

"The year I last left my maternal home," was the answer; and it was received by me as 'proof strong as holy writ' of the truth of all Mistress Mary's statement.

My stepmother was no longer the pure,

the disinterested, high-minded woman I had from infancy imagined her to be. She stood before me shorn of her beams, a cold, calculating, ambitious person, rending asunder the fond ties of love, to wed with one she only meanly and selfishly preferred in consequence of his rank and fortune. I saw in her, the destroyer of him who loved her even unto death; and the designing plotter, who was now bent on accomplishing for her brother, the same fortunate destiny she had achieved for herself. At this moment, Frederick Melville entered, and for the first time, I beheld him without pleasure. My mind was soured, and my imagination chilled, by the unworthy suspicions that had taken possession of it. Not that I had determined to resist his suit, whenever he might proffer it; oh! no, my affection was too rooted for such an effort of self-control; though it was not sufficiently strong or noble, to resist suspicion. But I determined to torment the brother and sister, for a brief space, and alarm their cupidity, or ambition, by the display of an indifference which I was far from feeling: and, when I had sufficiently tortured them, I would graciously extend the olive branch, and bestow on my terrified lover, the hand I believed he was passionately longing to possess, but durst not demand.

How strange is the human heart! Here was I, a woman, and a vain woman, too, who would have resented with anger any doubt expressed of the personal attractions I believed mine, now acting, as if my wealth and station were my sole charms, yet wanting the self-respect or dignity that ought under such a belief to have impelled me to a totally different conduct.

When, however, Frederick Melville took his leave, without having, by either a look or word, expressed any thing more than a friendly interest towards me, I felt deeply mortified, and unbidden tears, shed in the solitude of my chamber, proved that though absent, he was not forgotren. How did I now blame myself for having, as I imagined, by my coldness restrained the expression of Frederick's attachment. What would I not have given for one more interview with him, in which I might, by a renewal of former kindness, have elicited some symptom, if not declaration of the attachment, of which I so ardently longed to be assured; and which, now that it was withheld, appeared doubly essential to my happiness. How often did I find my eyes dwelling involuntarily on the portrait! and yet not half so frequently as my thoughts reverted to the dear original. The chairs and sofas on which I had seen him seated, the inanimate objects that decorated the saloons, which I had heard him commend, all were now invested with a tender interest in my imagination. A rose, which he had presented to me many months before, I had carefully preserved between the leaves of a book; and never did a day elapse without my looking at it, nay more, pressing its faded and withered leaves to my lips. Ah! none but a woman's heart can ever feel as mine did then, when in solitude and in silence, occupied solely by one dear image, I created a bright world of mine own, nor dreamed that *he* who lent it all its rainbow hues, would ere long shroud it in sadness and gloom.

Lady Walsingham rarely mentioned her brother's name to me, and when I introduced it, seemed more disposed to change the topic than to expatiate on it. But even this reserve on her part appeared to my prejudiced mind, as the effect of artifice; and I inwardly smiled at my detection of it. Yet there were moments, too, when looking on her fair and open brow, where candor seemed to have set its seal, that, struck with her resemblance to Frederick, I longed to throw myself into her arms, and confess how dear he was to me. But a sense of modesty, that guardian angel of female youth, checked the impulse; and sent me again to the solitude of my chamber, there to murmur his name, and breathe those sighs which are half hope, half prayer, and which never yet emanated but from a young female heart.

My frequent abstractions and pensiveness, Lady Walsingham attributed, or seemed to attribute, wholly to regret for my dear father. She would dwell for hours on his virtues, in commendation of which she was eloquent; and even to my prejudiced mind, her praises carried conviction of the sincerity that dictated them.

The seclusion in which we lived, nourished the affection that had usurped my breast—there it reigned despotic sovereign; and though I deeply, truly mourned the dear parent I had lost, I mourned not as those do, who have no engrossing passion to whisper hopes, that in spite of tender regret for the past, can make the future bright and cheering. There is no magician like Love—he had now spread his witcheries around me, and I saw all, through the brilliant medium of his spells.

The year of mourning passed slowly away. We had now been some months

without a visit from Frederick, and his sister continued the same system of reserve, avoiding as much as possible all mention of him. This system increased, instead of diminishing my attachment; I became pensive, and abstracted, my health began to suffer, and Lady Walsingham consulted Doctor Warminster. He, good man, was inclined to attribute my indisposition to the extreme seclusion in which we lived; he advised more air, more exercise, more society, and dwelt on the necessity of amusement being taken into our scheme of cure. Cheerfully, did my affectionate stepmother enter into all his views, though solitude would have been more congenial to her own taste. Still, I did not become better; and the good doctor began to be alarmed. I observed that lady Walsingham and he had frequent consultations, and that she daily grew more pensive. She gave up sitting in the room in which Frederick's portrait was placed, though that had been hitherto her favorite apartment; and this change I felt as an unkindness, the motive of which I attributed to a desire of still more exciting my attachment to him, by thus seemingly opposing it.

One day while Dr. Warminster was feeling my pulse, he suddenly asked Lady Walsingham, when her brother was to be in town. I felt my heart throb at the question, and I suppose my pulse indicated its effect; for the doctor looked more grave than ever, and cast a significant glance at my stepmother, who answered that she did not expect him soon. That night while undressing, I observed that Mistress Mary seemed big with some intelligence, which she only wanted a word of encouragement to communicate. Latterly, a sense of propriety had induced me to check her loquacity, by avoiding asking her any questions; but now impelled by a vague curiosity, I led her to divulge the news she was anxious to promulgate.

"And so your ladyship of course has heard as how my lady's brother is soon to change his condition," said Mary.

Now, strange as it may appear, this figure or phrase of Mary's of "changing condition," though a frequent and favorite one with persons of her class, I had never heard before; and imagined it to mean a change of position, or residence.

"No, indeed," said I, "I have heard nothing on the subject."

"Well, to be sure, how sly, and secret some people can be," resumed Mistress Mary. "Perhaps they think that after all, he may be got to break his sweetheart's heart the same as others broke theirs, and be the cause of their being sent to the grave, as that poor young gentleman in Sussex was. But he is a clergyman, and has the fear of God before his eyes; and so will remain true and constant to his sweetheart, of which I'm glad enough; for though he is very handsome and a very good young gentleman, I would not like to see a great rich heiress, and a lady of title too, demean herself by marrying a poor parson."

"Why, what do you, what can you mean?" demanded I impatiently.

"Nothing at all, your ladyship, but that the Rev. Mr. Melville is going to be married to a Miss Latimer, a great beauty they say, with whom he fell in love at Cambridge."

I was so wholly unprepared for this intelligence, that it fell on me like a painful shock. I neither screamed, nor fainted, though I felt nearly ready to drop from my chair; but I became so deadly pale, that Mistress Mary grew alarmed; and poured out a glass of water, of which I swallowed a portion, saying that I had a sudden spasm.

I dismissed Mary as soon as possible; for I longed to be alone, that I might, free from the restraint of a witness, give way to the agony that was destroying me.

Never shall I forget that night! when the rich heiress, the spoilt child of fortune, who thought she had only to express a wish to have it instantly gratified, first discovered that she loved in vain; that *he*, on whom she had lavished all the idolatry of her first affection, preferred another, and would soon be lost to her forever. Fearful was the conflict in my mind, as through the long night, I counted hour after hour, sleep still refusing to visit my tear-stained lids. I wept in intolerable anguish, the destruction of all my air-built hopes, my fairy dreams of happiness, my pride, my love, my delicacy, all rankling beneath the deep wound inflicted on them. And *he*, on whom I doted, even while I thought, dreamed but of him, he was wholly occupied by another, totally regardless of me! There was bitterness, there was agony in the thought!

Then came the reflection, that I had been deceived, yes deceived, and duped; and I unjustly, ungratefully condemded Lady Walsingham for not having told me of her brother's love for another. Now were Mistress Mary's insinuations explained; Lady Walsingham had long known of her brother's attachment, and hoped to induce him to conquer it, and, like her, to sacrifice

love to ambition. How unworthy! and yet while admitting the unworthiness, I was weak enough to wish that her endeavors and hopes had been crowned with success; and that I, on any condition, had become the wife of him I so fondly, passionately loved. Then came the humiliating doubt of my own personal attractions; a doubt fraught with tenfold chagrin to one who had hitherto believed herself supremely handsome.

"Oh! why," exclaimed I, in a paroxysm of tears, "why was I not born beautiful enough to attract, to win him from my rival! What avails my wealth, my station, and all the boasted advantages I am said to possess, when they could not attain for me the only heart I desire to make mine; the only being on whom my eyes can ever dwell with rapture!"

My mind was in a piteous state, agitated by various and contending emotions; one moment governed by jealous rage, and the next, subdued to melting softness, by the recollections of past days. Then came the unjust belief, that I had been deceived, wronged, by my stepmother. She *must* have known that he loved another—why then allow me to indulge the dangerous illusion that he ever could be any thing to me?

How prone are we to blame others, when we ourselves only are in fault. I really now felt angry with Lady Walsingham, and visited on her the censure that could only apply to myself. I thought of my dear lost father, and my tears streamed afresh, when I reflected that had he been spared to me, how would he have sympathised in this, my first, and cruel disappointment; he, with indulgent fondness had ever shielded me from sorrow. Now was it, that the fatal system of indulgence, hitherto so injudiciously pursued towards me, met its punishment; for, in proportion to the facility afforded to the gratification of my wishes up to this period, was the bitterness with which this disappointment was endured.

The morning found me ill, mentally and physically ill. My swoln eyes, and pale cheek alarmed Mistress Mary, and her report quickly brought my stepmother to my bed-side. To her anxious inquiries, she met only tears and sullenness; but though evidently surprised at my ungraciousness, it extorted no look or expression of anger, or impatience from her. Doctor Warminster was sent for, and he, having administered a composing draught, seated himself by my bed-side, to watch its effects. His gentleness soothed, while it rendered me ashamed of my own petulance; and in answer to his repeated interrogatories, I at length admitted that something had occurred to give me pain.

"But why, my dear child, for so you must permit me to call you, do you evince an unkindness to Lady Walsingham, so unusual, and I must add, so unmerited. This is not amiable, it is not grateful, towards one who is so fondly, so sincerely devoted to you. If you were acquainted with the total abnegation of self, the uncomplaining patience, with which your stepmother has borne the most cruel disappointment that can befal a female heart, a disappointment where an affection of the tenderest nature had existed, you would, I am sure, feel an increased respect and regard for her; and avoid even the semblance of ingratitude for the years of solicitude, and never-ceasing attention, you have experienced from her."

"If she have experienced a disappointment of the heart," answered I sullenly, "whose is the fault? Did she not, with cold and calculating selfishness, break the bonds that united her to the lover of her choice, in order to become a countess, and to acquire the wealth in which he was deficient?"

The good doctor's face assumed an expression of severity, mingled with surprise, that somewhat moderated the expression of my ill humor.

"Who can have been so wicked, and so unjust, as to have invented this falsehood, to impose on your credulity!" demanded he indignantly.

"Was not Lady Walsingham engaged to marry a young gentleman in Sussex? and did she not break through her engagement, in order to wed my father? and did not the poor young man die in consequence of the disappointment?" asked I, with the air of one who is convinced of the truth of what she utters.

"It is true, she was engaged to marry a young gentleman in Sussex, to whom her affections had been plighted. But his mother, influenced by the evil and scandalous reports circulated by Lady Theodosia Walsingham, insisted on his breaking off the engagement; and though he, convinced of the innocence of Miss Melville, was willing, nay anxious to brave the displeasure of his only parent, the young lady from a sense of duty, though fondly attached to him, declined to become his wife. When your noble, your generous father, with a view solely to your happi-

ness, made her through me the offer of his hand, she unequivocally declined it; until I urged that your health, nay, perhaps your life, depended on her answer. She made your worthy father acquainted with the real state of her heart; and he honored her the more for her candor, while acknowledging that his own affections, except for his child, were interred with the wife he had never ceased to love and mourn. A consumption which was hereditary in the family, had previously rendered all hope of the recovery of her rejected lover vain; her acceptance of his hand could not have retarded his death, and her union with your excellent father did not expedite that melancholy event. Lady Walsingham had no reserve with her noble husband; he knew the deep disappointment she had endured, and the regret she never ceased to feel for the object of her youthful attachment. He was fully aware, that not to ambition, but to affection for *you*, did he owe the hand of Lady Walsingham; and he honored and esteemed her, for the exemplary manner in which, concealing every symptom of sorrow, she devoted her whole thoughts, her whole time, to her husband and his child. And this, Lady Arabella, is the person you could misjudge, and of whom you could listen to false and evil reports emanating from some malicious calumniator! I must confess, I am shocked by the ingratitude you have evinced."

So was I also; and ashamed, as well as shocked. How did the conduct and motives of my amiable stepmother thus explained to me, make me blush for my own! And yet a latent feeling, a base suspicion, with regard to her reasons for wishing to engage her brother to wed me, still lurked in my mind. The good doctor saw that, though penitent for having believed the tale against my stepmother, my dissatisfaction had not yet entirely subsided, though I forbore to express it.

"I will now, Lady Arabella," continued he, "give you another proof of the disinterested conduct of Lady Walsingham. When your noble father, on your completing your sixteenth year, aware of the precarious tenure of his existence, and anxious to secure for you a protector, imagined that Mr. Melville, from his personal and mental qualifications, might not be an unsuitable husband for you, signified his wishes to Lady Walsingham," (how I felt my heart beat, and my cheeks blush, at this part of the good Doctor's discourse!) "her Ladyship immediately pointed out the disparity of station and fortune between you, and her brother; and urged your claims to a more noble and brilliant alliance. Lord Walsingham, however, who had studied the character of Mr. Melville, feeling persuaded that your happiness might be more secure in a union with him, than in a marriage with one of higher birth, and proportionate opulence, persevered in his desire of the subject being proposed to Mr. Melville, by his sister. Well do I remember the deep regret with which your good father learned that Mr. Melville's affections were engaged, to a young and portionless lady, the daughter of a clergyman, at Cambridge. This discovery was made only the last day of your father's life; and Lady Walsingham, seeing how much it disappointed her noblemind-ed husband, wept for his sorrow; though she could not do otherwise than respect the disinterestedness of her brother, in adhering to his first choice, notwithstanding the great temptation offered to him."

Now was the delicacy and prudence of my stepmother's conduct entirely revealed, and the reserve of her brother explained. And these were the persons whom I had wronged by my mistrust! whom I had believed capable of playing a game to secure me, and my fortune! How unworthy did I appear in my own eyes, though my suspicions were happily, as I thought, known only to myself. Mistress Mary, who had been the medium of infusing them into my mind, lost a considerable portion of my favor; for I in this instance acted with the injustice to which so many are prone, that of avenging, on the instrument of their unworthy curiosity and suspicion, the blame which they may have incurred, and almost solely deserve. My vanity too was now less deeply mortified by discovering that Frederick Melville had lost his heart ere I had attained an age to admit of my being a candidate for it. How I longed to behold the woman who was capable of inspiring a passion that could thus resist the temptation that my poor dear father had held out. Then came the thought, that my preference for Frederick Melville had been detected by the fond eyes of my parent, and that it was this detection which led to his offering him my hand. Lady Walsingham, too, had observed the state of my heart, and tried to wean it from its first attachment. My soul was penetrated with a deep sense of the unbounded love of the parent I had lost, and of the delicacy and affection of her, to whose care he had bequeathed me. My

sullenness and petulance melted away, like ice beneath the sun, as I reflected on their goodness: and I was no longer the rich heiress, who could command love and condescend to reward it, but the orphan, who was disposed to be grateful for affection, and once more anxious to merit it.

The Doctor saw that a salutary change had occurred in me; and my gentle stepmother was soon made happy by being permitted to lavish on me all the demonstrations of that tenderness which she so truly felt. No word of explanation ever passed between her and me, relative to my disappointment with regard to her brother. With womanly delicacy and tact, she avoided all semblance of knowing my attachment, though the softness of her manners indicated a sympathy, that I was now thoroughly capable of estimating. When I looked on her still beautiful but pensive face, and reflected how courageously she had borne up against the destruction of her youthful hopes of happiness, I was incited to vanquish the regret, that, in spite of my best resolves, still would prey on me. Pride, the besetting sin of my nature, and the most successful adversary that ever coped with love, came to my aid, and assisted me, perhaps still more powerfully than reason, in conquering my girlish passion. To continue to love one, whose heart was given to another, was mean, was unfeminine; and I half vanquished my weakness in feeling it to be one.

Still I heard nothing of Frederick Melville's marriage. Was it postponed from a fear of my not being able to support it? There was insult in the supposition: and I determined to do all in my power to bring the nuptials to a speedy conclusion.

Seated, one day, in the drawing-room appropriated to Lady Walsingham, and in which hung the portrait of her brother, I made a desperate effort and asked her when Frederick was to be married. She answered hesitatingly, that the precise time had never been named.

"Would it not be better, dear mother," said I, "that the marriage took place at once. Theirs has been a long attachment, and all who esteem them must desire to see it rewarded. Would it not be kind to have a miniature copy made of Frederick's portrait," and I looked at it with a steady gaze, "as a nuptial present to his betrothed? And, we, dear mother, must send suitable gifts to the bride."

All this was said so quietly and naturally, that Lady Walsingham saw not how much the effort cost me; but pride instigated it; and what this despot commands he generally supplies his votaries with the power of executing. Lady Walsingham had so little of this leaven of fine natures in hers, that she now began to think that she had been in error when she imagined that I had entertained more than a sentiment of friendship for her brother; and I did all in my power to encourage the delusion. She wrote, therefore, to advise Frederick to have the marriage completed; and at my request, invited the bride elect and bridegroom, to come to London, that the ceremony might be celebrated beneath our roof. I busied myself in preparing wedding gifts for the bride, and counted the hours until she arrived. I saw that Lady Walsingham occasionally feared that I was playing a part; but so skilfully did I enact it, that at length I deceived even her.

Miss Lattimer and her father arrived. How my heart throbbed when I saw her enter! yet I had sufficient self-control to conceal every symptom of agitation, if I could not subdue the deep emotion. She was exquisitely beautiful. A Madonna countenance, such as the divine Raphael loved to paint, in which softness and modesty lent additional charms to features of the most delicate proportions, and a complexion of unequalled brilliancy. But why attempt to describe what a portrait of her, painted at my request, so much better explains? Here it is; yet lovely as is the picture, it did not render justice tothe fair original. No longer did I wonder that Frederick Melville, for her sake, resisted the temptation offered to him by my wealth: her beauty alone would have justified his choice even to the most fastidious critic of female loveliness; but her gentle sweetness of disposition, and unassuming good sense, enhanced her personal attractions.

When Frederick arrived, no symptom of emotion was visible in the frank and cordial greeting which I gave him; while he, imposed on by the easy cheerfulness of my manner, resumed his ancient cordiality, and unreservedly manifested, in my presence, all the tenderness he felt for his betrothed. The firm resolution to conceal and vanquish an attachment, is an effectual step towards the accomplishment of that difficult task: and the necessity of witnessing the beloved object's demonstrations of affection for another, though a painful, is a still more efficacious remedy.

I accompanied Eliza Lattimer to the altar, and heard him I loved, plight to her

those vows which I once hoped—ah! how vainly hoped—might have been pledged to me; and though this effort cost me a pang, and a severe one, I was repaid by the salutary effect which this termination of all hope, this positive and eternal barrier between us, produced. To bestow a thought or a sigh on him who was now, in the sight of God and man, and by his own free will and choice, the husband of another, would have been not only wicked, but mean; and I fear pride, more than reason, or religion, assisted my firm resolve to subdue every trace of my ill-starred attachment.

The new married pair set off for one of my country seats, to spend the honeymoon; and left me, if not happy, at least self satisfied with the consciousness of having well performed the difficult *role* I had imposed on myself. My attachment to Lady Walsingham had returned in all its pristine force. A secret sympathy united us; and, though never expressed, its influence was sensibly felt by both. It was perhaps this bond of union that precluded her from discovering the great defect of my character, which was an ungovernable pride; or, at least, it might have prevented her from taking sufficient pains to eradicate or soften it. Hers was too meek a spirit to cope with mine; she shrank from opposition, and was more prone to lament errors in those she loved. or to avoid all occasion of eliciting their display, than to exert the necessary firmness for combating and triumphing over them.

I soon saw this sole weakness in her otherwise faultless character; and availed myself of my knowledge of it to acquire an undisputed empire over her. An increased delicacy of health, of which I had lately shown symptoms, alarmed the sensitive affection of Lady Walsingham: and Doctor Warminster, on being consulted, recommended that the effect of a milder climate should be tried for the approaching winter. I eagerly acceded to the proposal, and in a short time after, my stepmother and I, attended by a numerous suite, left England, for Italy.

I pass over the surprise and pleasure, which our stay in the French capital, during the first few weeks, afforded me. I was of an age when every novelty charms; and I was travelling with a person whose sole study was to increase my stock of enjoyments.

While at Paris, we met, at the English ambassador's, the Marquis of Clydesdale, a young man remarkable for personal attractions, and not less so for an amiability of manner and general information, that rendered his society peculiarly agreeable to, and universally sought after, by his compatriots. An expression of seriousness, amounting almost to melancholy, prevaded the countenance of Lord Clydesdale, and, in my opinion, lent it an additional interest; and an occasional pensiveness and abstraction detraced not from this feeling. I found myself unconsciously comparing the countenance of Lord Clydesdale with that of one still remembered, though no longer loved; and I was compelled to own, that, for intellectual expression, that of his lordship possessed the superiority. The air noble and *distingué*, peculiar to, and only to be acquired by good company, was strikingly conspicuous in Lord Clydesdale; and gave a dignified ease to his movements, that impressed the beholders with a conviction that he was no ordinary person.

We had met three or four times after our introduction, and had only exchanged a few casual words of common-place civility; until one day at a dinner at the ambassador's, happening to be placed next him at table, we insensibly fell into conversation. We soon discovered that we were about to spend the winter at the same place, in Italy; and this circumstance led to his giving me many interesting details of that country, where he had already sojourned some two or three years before. The originality and justice of his remarks, and the unpretending frankness and simplicity with which they were made, impressed me highly in his favor. Perhaps they owed something of their charm, to the handsome countenance, and dignified bearing of him who uttered them; for my youthful predilection for beauty still influenced me, more than I was willing to admit, even to myself.

The next day saw the Marquis of Clydesdale a visitor at our hotel; and each succeeding one marked the progress of an intimacy that was formed between us. He lent me books, conducted Lady Walsingham and myself to the studios of the different artists of merit, and attached himself to us, at the various *soirées* at which we met.

I soon became accustomed to his presence; nay, more, when he was absent I experienced a void in our circle, that the society of no other man, however amiable, could fill up. I found myself impatiently expecting his arrival, at the hour he was

in the habit of coming; and felt my heart beat quicker as I recognised his well-known step, or heard the tones of his voice. These were happy days! In the course of life there is perhaps no epoch so delightful, as the first hours of a passion, budding into flower, but not yet full blown; when hope silences the whispers of doubt, and security has not destroyed the trembling anxiety that lends to love its strong, its thrilling excitement. I hardly dared to ask myself whether I was beloved, though I was conscious that my own heart had received an impression that rendered a reciprocity of sentiment essential to my peace. Happy in the present, fearing to anticipate the future, I *felt* as if in a blissful dream, from which I dreaded to awaken.

More than one nobleman, of my own country, had sought to find favor in my eyes, at Paris. It was in the French capital that I first entered into general society; for my extreme youth prior to the death of my dear father, and the seclusion in which we had lived ever since that melancholy event, had precluded my presentation at court, or my introduction into the circles in which my station and fortune entitled me to take a place. Consequently, until my arrival at Paris, I had no opportunity of seeing, or being seen.

My vanity was not a little gratified by observing that I was the principal magnet of attraction, in the re-unions, to which all the English of distinction flocked. It required some such balm, to sooth the mortification I had experienced in my first preference; and though a thought would sometimes intrude, that perhaps my wealth was even more seductive, in the eyes of my admirers, than myself, still my mirror showed me a face and figure that might, even if unaccompanied by the powerful adjuncts of broad lands and funded thousands, have captivated male hearts. I remarked, and with pain, that as each suitor approached to win attention, Lord Clydesdale gave way to them, with the air of a man who, having no intentions himself, determined not to interfere with those of others.

How did this conduct, on his part, wound and pique me! I discouraged my admirers, by such a decided and marked indifference towards them, that they soon perceived how trifling was their chance of success; and withdrew, leaving the field open to Lord Clydesdale, who resumed his place by me, and with an air of satisfaction, but with no indication of any intention of maintaining it, against any new pretender to my hand. The anxiety I now experienced, was far more poignant than that which I had known, when Frederick Melville, was the object of my girlish flame. It was now I began to think that *first love*, whatever may be said or sung of it, is not so arbitrary or durable in its influence, as young ladies imagine; and that, however unromantic it may sound, a second love is not inferior in the hopes, fears, and tenderness, to which it gives birth. It has only one deterioration, and that is the humiliating consciousness that it may, like the former one, subside. Yet, even this consciousness, like that of the inevitable certainty of death, sometimes produces little effect on the feelings, and as little on the conduct of mortals.

The Duc D'Entragues, a descendant of one of the most ancient houses in France, and remarkable for good looks, and a certain animation of manner, and vivacity of mind, peculiar to his countrymen, which, if it produce not wit, at least resembles it so strongly, as often to impose on those who are not very competent judges, now paid his court to me. Unlike my English suitors, he was not to be checked by coldness, or disgusted by indifference. The manifestations of both, which I was not slow in making, as soon as I discovered that his attentions meant more than mere *politesse*, were received by him as proofs of the natural *gaucherie* of manner, universally attributed to English ladies, by foreigners. He was so impressed with a belief of his own fascinations, that he could not doubt their effect on me; and approached me with the air of a man certain of success, but grateful to the vanqnished for the facility of his victory.

I became provoked by this exhibition of self complacency and conceit, and redoubled the *hauteur* of my manner. Lord Clydesdale, as was usual with him, resigned his place by my side, whenever the Duc approached; and this conduct on his part confirmed the hopes of my confident admirer. I became piqued and offended with Lord Clydesdale, and, I fear, often permitted indications of my displeasure to be visible; but they produced no change in him, and he still continued to be a frequent, nay, almost a daily visitor at our hotel.

One morning Lady Walsingham was surprised by a letter from the Duc D'Entragues, requesting an interview. He came at the appointed hour; and—in a pompous speech, in which, notwithstanding *la politesse Franpaise*, he allowed *his* sense

of the honor he was conferring, to be somewhat too evident—formally demanded my hand. Lady Walsingham referred him to me; and he entered the saloon, where I was at work, congratulating himself and me, on the agreeable circumstance of not having encountered any resistance from *Madame ma Mere:*

"Mothers," he added, "being generally desirous of preventing their daughters from forming matrimonial engagements early in life, lest they should have their seeming age increased by the circumstance of being prematurely rendered grandmothers."

I blushed with anger, which he attributed to *mauvaise honte;* and attempting to seize my hand, he poured forth a rhapsody of compliments, a portion of which he meant for me, but a far larger part for himself. I could scarcely induce him to suppress his self-gratulations, in order that I might explain to him, how misplaced they were, at least, as far as I was concerned; and the expression of his countenance became perfectly ludicrous, as I explicitly and haughtily gave him an unqualified refusal.

What! refuse to be a duchesse, and of one of the most ancient houses in France? He did not exactly *say* this, but he implied something very like it. Why then had my mother given her sanction? but, above all, why could I, as a dutiful daughter, presume to reject the alliance my mother had approved. Such a thing never had been heard of in France, where the hands of sons and daughters are disposed of by their parents, without even a reference to the feelings of the parties most concerned.

It was an amusing scene to behold two people, under our peculiar circumstances, defending the customs of their separate countries; the lover, in the warmth of his defence of the superior wisdom and propriety of his own national institutions, for a time losing all sight of the violent passion he pretended to experience. When, however, he did recur to it, or rather when he resumed a repetition of the catalogue of the honors and advantages which I might inherit as Madame la Duchesse D'Entragues—among which, a *tabouret* at the chaste court of Louis XV was not omitted—I, in referring to Lady Walsingham, accidentally mentioned the words *Belle Mere.*

"How!" demanded he, eagerly, "is Madame la Comtesse de Walsingham *not* your mother, your own real mother?"

"Certainly not," replied I; "how could it be possible? she is only twenty-five years old; and I shall soon be eighteen."

"How very odd," said he; "yes, now that I remember, though it never struck me before, Lady Walsingham is *not* an old woman; *ma foi*, nor a plain one neither. *Au contraire*, she is good looking: and only twenty-five, did you not say? *C'est bien drole*, that I never remarked this before. Permit me to ask whether Madame la Comtesse has a large fortune?"

I answered in the affirmative, and stated the amount of her revenue, highly amused at observing the sudden interest excited by my information in the Duc's mind, relative to one whom, according to his own confession, he had scarcely even regarded during an acquaintance of some weeks.

"I never comprehend your English money," observed he, thoughtfully; "Six thousand pounds a year, I think you said; how much is that in our money? How many thousand louis do'r does it make?"

"You are doubtless, Monsieur le Duc, thinking of transferring the honor meant for me, to my stepmother."

"Another proof of my homage and *tendresse* for you," replied he, bowing low, 'when being so unfortunate as to be rejected by the lovely daughter, I wish to become in some way or other connected with her, by addressing my suit to her amiable relative. Would that you had a sister, charming Lady Arabella, who at all resembled you, but who was less cruel;" (and he tried to look sentimental) "but as, unfortunately you have not I must hope for consolation with *Madame votre Belle Mere.*"

Highly diverted by the natural levity, and assumed sentimentality of my *ci-devant* admirer, I asked him how he possibly could have believed that Lady Walsingham could have a daughter of my age.

"To say the truth," answered he, frankly and gaily," I never thought about the matter. I heard she was your mother; and we Frenchmen, when once a lady, and above all an English lady, has passed her teens, never know whether she is twenty-four or forty-four; all from your island are so fair and rosy. However, now that my attention is called to the subject, I must admit that Madame la Comtesse de Walsingham is *bien*, *tres bien*, *en verité*, but the beauty of Miladi Arabella so far eclipses that of all other women, that I must be pardoned for overlooking that of *la belle mere.* We forget the stars when the moon is shining, and only remark them when that bright orb is not visible."

The Duc and I parted on more friendly terms than we had ever met before. His

gaiety and frivolity amused me; and the perfect frankness with which he diplayed his equal indifference for her who had rejected him, and for her to whom he was intending to be a suitor, had something so irresistibly comic in it, that it was impossible not to be entertained. When he was leaving the room, I could not repress the desire of telling him that in case his suit was unsuccessful with my stepmother, I knew an English lady at Paris who I thought would have no objection to become Duchesse D'Entragues.

"Ah *méchante!*" said he smiling; but, on observing the gravity I assumed, he returned, and continued,

"*Eh bien!* should I be so unhappy as not to be accepted by Madame la Comtesse, I will remember your *amiable* offer, charming Lady Arabella, and claim its fulfilment; for, *en verité*, I admire your nation so much, that I am determined to have an English wife."

The Duc lost not a moment in laying his proposals at the feet, as he gallantly expressed himself, of my stepmother; who was more surprised than gratified by this transfer of his matrimonial intentions. She could scarcely believe it possible that he could so speedily and unblushingly avow a sentiment for her that little more than an hour before he had professed to entertain for me; and he appeared to find it as difficult to comprehend, that she could refuse his suit; having flattered himself, from the facility with which she, as he fancied, received his overtures for me, that *she* thought him irresistible.

All the temptations held out to me were repeated to her, with the additional one, of the possibility of her rivalling the reigning favorite of that day at Versailles, the celebrated Madame du Barry, and of acquiring an almost regal influence at Court.

The delicacy of Lady Walsingham precluded her from informing me of this courtier-like inducement; but the Duc subsequently repeated it himself to some of my friends, as a proof of the want of spirit and ambition of that low-born Englishwoman. But, what could he expect from the daughter of a *priest*—the offspring of sacrilege? He had not, however, he added, known this shocking circumstance until after he proposed, or never would he have offered her his hand. It was only in such an irreligious country as England that a priest durst acknowledge himself to be a father; or that the daughter of such an impious source could find a husband.

The Duc was in so perfect a state of ignorance of our religion, customs, and manners, that he could not comprehend that the ministers of our church were at liberty to marry; hence he concluded Lady Walsingham to be the offspring of sin and shame.

In two days after his rejection, the *femme de chambre* of Lady Walsingham, a young Englishwoman of remarkable beauty, with tears and blushes, informed her mistress that the French Duc was tormenting her with insulting proposals and letters. He had accidentally beheld the pretty Fanny; and, being disappointed in his offers to the two ladies of the family, addressed less honorable, but perhaps more sincere vows to the maid. She gave his letter to Lady Walsingham; I begged it of her. The following is a faithful transcript of it.

"My pretty heart, you have charm me. I loaf you, and tink you much too pretty to be von femme de chambre. If you will loaf me, I vill make you von grande ladi. You shall have von *charmant entre sol, des bijoux, a femme de chambre*, and a carriage, and never notings to do but amuse yourself, and loaf your devoted

"Le Duc D'E.

"My valet de chambre vil bring me your ansire."

Vexed as we were at this unprincipled attempt to corrupt the pretty and innocent Fanny, we could not resist a smile at the delectable *billet-doux*, which made no other impression on her to whom it was addressed, than indignation.

We quitted Paris in a few days, leaving the Duc D'Entragues to look out for new conquests, and to ridicule the want of taste of Englishwomen of all classes. Lord Clydesdale remained at Paris but a short time after our departure; and our next meeting was at Naples. The pleasure exhibited in his countenance at our *rencontre*, again awakened hope in my heart: whence it had lately been nearly banished, from observing his avoidance of every thing like marked attention. Our brief separation seemed to have thrown him off his guard; or, perhaps, it might be, that knowing the environs of Naples, and witnessing our desire to explore them, good nature tempted him to offer himself as our cicerone. No day passed in which we were not together; and each one found me still more assured of the deep hold he possessed over my affections, and less sanguine of that which I longed to obtain over his.

There were so few English travellers, at Naples, and the Neapolitans mingled so little with them, save on occasions of large balls, at which the English minister had the privilege of presenting his compatriots, that our habitual circle was much more circumscribed than at Paris. This seemed to gratify Lord Clydesdale; and increased the intimacy between us. We seldom parted at night without making an arrangement for some excursion for the following day; and time flew with a rapidity known only to those whose hearts are filled by a passion, which, in presence of its object, and surrounded by new and exciting scenery, gives a tenfold power to the wings of the hoary veteran.

The habitual pensiveness of Lord Clydesdale's manner seemed gradually to disappear; and to be replaced by a cheerfulness which, if it amounted not to gaiety, was more attractive to me. I have remarked that the generality of my sex prefer those of the other who are of a grave and sentimental turn; provided always, that the gravity proceeds not from dulness, but from a reflective cast of mind, which increases their respect, while it adds to the interest they experience. I have known a pale face and a pensive manner make impressions on female hearts that had successfully resisted the attacks of ruddy countenances and exhilarating gaiety: the possessor of these *agrémens* being more calculated to amuse than interest, are rarely remembered when absent. Women seldom forget the man who makes them sigh; but rarely recur to him who has excited their mirth, even though a brilliant wit may have been displayed in his *bon mots* and good stories. He, therefore, who would captivate the fastidious taste of *le beau sexe*, must eschew too frequent smiles, even though he may have fine teeth; and must likewise avoid occasioning or promoting the exhibition of those pearly ornaments in her he wishes to permanently please.

The newly acquired cheerfulness of Lord Clydesdale, however, gratified me beyond measure, because I attributed it to the effect of my presence on him: and I hailed it as the harbinger of an explicit acknowledgment of my power, and a demand for the hand I longed to give him; the heart having already anticipated his solicitation.

While returning from the beautiful and romantic island of Ischia, where we had sojourned for a few days, and gliding over a moonlit sea, smooth and polished, as though it were a vast mirror spread out to reflect the heavens, Lord Clydesdale first spoke to me of love. Even now, though age has thrown its snow, not only on my tresses, but on my heart, that evening is remembered, nearly as vividly as if it had lately passed. Nay! What do I say? Infinitely more vividly; for the events of recent years seem to me more vague, and indistinct than those of my early youth. As we approach the grave, our mother's breast, a second childhood is mercifully granted us; and we retain only the impressions which were stamped on the heart by the affections, while those of reason fade from the brain. Nature engraved the first; but experience formed the second. One is *felt;* the other has only been *thought*.

Yes, even now, in mental vision, I behold with a clearness to which my dim eyes can no more assist me, the dark, blue unruffled sea of the unrivalled Bay of Naples, with the glorious orb of light, and the thousand brilliant stars reflected on its glassy bosom. I hear the stroke of the oars, every movement of which sends forth a phosphoric effulgence from the surface of the waters, like a glittering sheet of molten silver. I hear the plaintive hymn of the peasants returning in the market boats from Naples; or the gay *barcarole* of the fishermen, mingled with the sounds of guitars and soft voices, that float past us. I see the island of Procida, in our rear, on the left, with Cape Misenum; and on the right, the fairy island of Nisida rising like an enchanted castle at the touch of some necromancer, from the bosom of the deep. Yes, all the scenes are present to my imagination, with the delicious reverie to which they gave birth, and the face of him I loved; on which the beams of the moon shed a light that increased the intellectual character of its beauty.

We had been silent some time, each occupied, or rather abstracted, and softened by the influence of the balmy air of that luxuriant climate, and the surrounding loveliness of Nature. At length he spoke—

"Such a night and such a scene as this are rarely granted to us of the cold and sunless north. There is something soothing, calm, and holy in its influence; and yet, though sweet and soothing, it is melancholy too."

His voice was low and musical, and his countenance was in harmony with its tone; for it was mild, but mournful.

"This repose and beauty of nature," resumed he, "make one feel increased tenderness for those dear to us, still spared, with whom we share the enjoyment: but it also brings back the memory of those we have loved and lost—with whom we can share it no more. Can you, fair Arabella, who as yet have known only the cloudless spring of life, comprehend that while mourning an object, once inexpressibly dear, and still fondly remembered, the heart may awaken to another attachment; may again indulge emotions believed to be for ever departed; and may dare to hope to meet sympathy where now all its wishes point? When I saw you, dear Arabella, I thought I could never love again; I was so certain that my heart was dead to that passion, and buried in the early grave of her who first taught it to throb with tenderness, that I fearlessly trusted myself in the dangerous ordeal of your society. I found I was in error; such attractions have proved their irresistible empire; and I love you, truly, tenderly. May I indulge a hope that you will be my sweet consoler for past disappointment and sorrow; and that you will teach this care-worn heart to forget all but you?"

He paused, and I was speechless from emotion. At length, then, the certainty of knowing myself beloved was mine! a certainty that, previously to its existence, would, I fancied, have conferred unutterable happiness upon me. Did it now produce this effect! Alas! No! The felicity such a conviction would have bestowed was destroyed by the mortifying fact of ascertaining that he had loved another; that the bloom and freshness of a first passion could never be mine; and that I inspired only a second, perhaps a much less fervent affection than my predecessor had excited in the heart, where I wished to have reigned alone! Severe was my disappointment, as jealousy—aye, jealousy of the dead—shot its envenomed arrows through my heart.

I could have wept in very bitterness; but shame, womanly shame, checked this exposure of the secret feelings of my soul; and silent and trembling I almost feared to trust myself with words.

"You answer me not, dearest Arabella," resumed Lord Clydesdale, his voice tremulous with emotion. "Have I then deceived myself in thinking that I might hope to create an interest in that gentle heart?"

Tears involuntarily filled my eyes; I longed to, but dared not tell him that my silence proceeded from no want of the sentiment he desired to create—but, alas! rather from an excess of it, which rendered me wretched at the knowledge that he had loved before. A thought of rejecting his suit now that I found with what bitter feelings an acceptance of it would be accompanied crossed my mind; but I turned affrighted from the contemplation of banishing from my sight, the only being whose presence was necessary to my happiness. No! I would accept the portion of his heart that might still be mine—I would deign to occupy a small niche in that temple, dedicated to the worship of the dead. I, proud and haughty as I was, would try to be satisfied with the ashes of a fire which another had kindled; but even this humiliation was less painful than to lose him altogether. These thoughts passed rapidly through my mind. The misery of years was compressed into the brief period which had elapsed since his avowal of affection; and already my heart had grown old in suffering. I gave him my hand, for I could not speak; and he pressed it fondly to his lips, while he murmured words of tenderness, which soothed, though they did not satisfy, the demon jealousy that was writhing within my tortured breast. Had any one told me that I should thus feel when first assured of his preference, how would I have denied the possibility! Tears I might have believed would flow; for joy and grief declare themselves by this dew of the heart: but I would have asserted that mine would be tears of joyful tenderness, of grateful, softened happiness. What were they now? The waters of bitterness, springing from a fountain newly opened in the soul, and never again to be sealed, except by death.

Before we separated on that eventful night, he asked permission to inform Lady Walsingham that I had *not rejected him*. The very terms he used softened me; for they indicated that he had remarked, that my manner of receiving his suit was more like a non-rejection than a positive acceptance of it; a delicate and discerning homage that gratified my sensitiveness.

Never did hermit or philosopher reflect more on the disappointments that await the hopes of mortals, than did I through the long and sleepless night which followed Lord Clydesdale's declaration of love: that declaration which I fancied was to have conferred unmingled felicity. As the whispered words of tenderness he had breathed in my ear, were recalled, the recollection that similar words had been

poured into the ear of another, came to torment me. The soft glances of love with which he sought to meet my eyes when urging his suit, had been often fixed on another, perhaps a fairer and dearer face; and the gentle pressure of his handhad often been felt by one who had enjoyed all the bloom and freshness of his first affections. Had he ceased to love her? that he had not ceased to remember and mourn her, had he confessed; and now *my* fondand fervent affection was to be repaid by the comparatively cold and languid one of a disappointed and exhausted heart.

And yet there were moments in which my better feelings prevailed—moments in which I pitied the sorrow he had endured, and almost determined to sacrifice my selfish regrets, and devote my life to his happiness. Yes, I would be the soother of the traces left by past grief; and the creator of new hopes, new blessings. I would generously stifle my own disappointment in pity to his; I would question him on all that he had endured, identify myself by the force of my sympathy with his mournful recollections of her he had lost; and teach him gently, gradually to forget her, in his devoted attachment to me. How ardently did I long to hear every particular connected with his former passion. Was the object beautiful?—How strange is the human heart! My vanity led me to wish that she had been fair in no ordinary degree; for there is something peculiarly humiliating to a woman vain of her own pretensions to beauty in becoming the successor of a plain one, in the affections of a husband. And yet I had a latent dread, that if she had been as I was disposed to imagine her, the recollections of her attractions might eclipse the reality of mine. In short, my ill-governed mind was in such a state of morbid excitement, that I scarcely knew what I desired. Only one sentiment stood prominently forth above all others, and that was disappointment—deep and bitter disappointment, arising in the consciousness that all the wild and fond illusions of love, which I wished him whom I adored to have entertained for the first and only time for me, he had already experienced. Then came the thought, that I too, had loved before; and yet in this my second attachment, none of the fond illusions that characterised the first were wanting.

There was some comfort in this recollection; until it was followed by the painful one; that my first affection, having been unpartaken by him who inspired it, had never been cemented by the thousand nameless but powerful associations that only a mutual tenderness can bestow. Mine was nothing more than a mere girlish fancy, never matured by sympathy, or rendered indelible by reciprocity. I forgot in the excitement of the actual present, all the sufferings of the less vivid past. The waking dreams, sleepless nights, and tear-stained pillow, were all forgotten; and the passion which, while it existed, I had believed to have been as violent as inndestructible, was now considered to be nothing more than an evanescent preference. Strange infatuation! the repetition of which, has induced some mortals, with susceptible feelings, to regard their hearts as plants, that, though subject to the laws of nature in casting off their leaves at certain periods, can always put forth fresh shoots, and bloom again as genially as before. I even excused the intensity of my present sentiments ever those of my past, by the superiority of the object which had given them birth. The graceful the dignified Lord Clydesdale, with his noble air and polished manners, cast into shade the handsome person, but grave and simple demeanor, of Frederick Melville. Nay, I now wondered how I ever could have been captivated by him, and smiled at my owa delusion.

Such are some of the incongruities of that almost inexplicable enigma—a woman's heart.

When Lady Walsingham congratulated me next day on the prospect of happiness that now opened to me, and expressed her warm approbation of my suitor, I could scarcely restrain my tears; and I looked so little joyous on the occasion, that she positively imagined she had been in error in supposing that Lord Clydesdale had interested my feelings. Little did she know the tumult to which my mind was a prey at that moment! for though I had so often experienced her sympathising kindness, a latent sentiment, it might be vanity or shame, or both, prevented me from avowing my real sentiments.

When Lord Clydesdale came, the increased tenderness and animation of his manner reassured me. The solicitude with which he marked my pallid cheek and swollen eyes, was so apparent, that hope whispered that love alone, could have excited such interest. I longed, yet feared to question him of the past, when we were alone. I dreaded to revive an image in his recollection, which I desired,

oh! how anxiously desired, might be banished from it forever; and yet the thought of her whose memory I dreaded to recall, was so predominant in mine, and filled me with such painful emotions, that I felt that I could have no peace until he should have reposed in my breast, the mournful tale of his former attachment. Often did the question hover on my lips; and as often did it die away, without my being able to frame words that would elicit his confidence without betraying the secret jealousy which was torturing me. There is a conscious unworthiness in jealousy, which, if the victim be proud, makes her shrink from its exhibition. I felt this powerfully, and added to it, was the dread of forfeiting his esteem, by the display of this egotistical passion. I am now surprised when I reflect on the duplicity with which I affected a strong sympathy in his regret for her he had lost; and still more surprised, when I remember how completely he was the dupe of this pretended sympathy. His love for me seemed positively to have been increased tenfold, by the interest I evinced in the fate of my predecessor. My generosity so superior, as he said, to that of the generality of females, delighted him.

How little did he know the heart of woman! For though there may be *many* who might be gentle enough to regret an unknown individual of their own sex, who is represented as having gone down young beautiful and good, to an early grave, while yet love and hope would fain have bound her to earth, few have sufficient self-control to conquer her jealous emotions, while listening to the recapitulations of the perfections of the lost one; or the grief her loss had excited in the breast of the object of her own affection. A man precludes a similar confidence from the woman he loves, by openly displaying his total want of sympathy, in any allusion to previous attachments, even should a woman be so devoid of tact as to make them; while we of the softer sex, though pained to the heart by such disclosures, shrink from checking them, though they are hoarded in the memory, to be often dwelt upon, but never without pain.

This peculiar dislike to the belief of a lover ever having before experienced the tender passion, has been often ascribed to vanity; but I believe it originates in a delicacy less reprehensible, and consequently more entitled to commiseration. Devoid of refinement and delicacy must that woman be, who, having accepted a suitor, entertains him with lamentations *for*, or descriptions *of*, the one who preceded him: like the lady, who, when married a second time, dwelt so fondly and perpetually on the merits of her poor dear first husband, that she compelled his successor to *declare*, that however much *she* might regret the defunct, *he* still more truly mourned his death. It is this indelicacy that led a man, who knew human nature well, to assert that a man should never marry a widow, however attractive, whose first husband had not been *hanged;* as that ignominious catastrophe furnished the only security for her not continually reverting to him.

But to resume the thread of my narrative: no day elapsed, that Lord Clydesdale did not inflict a jealous pang on my heart, by some unconscious reference to past times; until at last my apparent sympathy lured him into a more explicit disclosure of his feelings; and he related the story of his first love.

It was a simple one; but the intensity of his emotion in repeating it, the warmth with which he dwelt on the personal and mental charms of her he had lost, wounded me to the soul. Yet, though writhing under the infliction, I so skilfully concealed my sufferings, that he was the dupe to my affected interest about one to whose death alone I owed his present affection. There is a great though secret pleasure in talking of any former attachment, that has not been dissolved by circumstances humiliating to vanity. Those broken by inconstancy are seldom recurred to, because they are mortifying to self-love. But to dwell on a love that ended but with life, and to repeat incidents strongly indicative of the force of the attachment of the deceased, is one of the greatest, though apparently the least, egotistical gratifications to which our *amour propre* can have recourse. One can repeat how well she loved him, in a thousand varied ways, without shocking the ears of the confidant, by his self-eulogiums; yet each of these examples of the passion that has been felt for the narrator, may be considered as indubitable proofs of his attractions and merits.

Lord Clydesdale's first love was a young and fascinating creature, born with the germ of a disease, that seems ever to select the fairest objects for its prey. Consumption, which, like the pagans of old, adorns its victims for the sacrifice, had rendered the beauty of the youthful Lucinda Harcourt still more dazzlingly bright. The hectic of her cheek, the lustre of her eye, and the deep vermillion of her lips,

those sure and fatal symptoms of the destroyer, which like the canker-worm in the rose, feeds on its core while the external petals still wear their fresh hue, were considered by her lover, as charms peculiarly her own, and not as indications of incipient disease. Even in relating her lingering illness, and mournful death, he seemed unconscious that she fell a prey to a malady hereditary in her family, and to which her mother owed her death in the bloom of youth. No, with the delusion inherent in mortals, which ever seeks, even in misfortune some salve from vanity, he attributed the utimely death of the fair Lucinda to the unwonted agitation produced by the excessive attachment, with which he had inspired her youthful breast; and the anxiety attending the period, previous to his formal demand of her hand; for it appears that he had, though deeply smitten, taken a considerable period to reflect, before he proposed for her. He spoke in such panegyrics of the transparency of her complexion, and the sylph-like fragility of her form, that I almost longed to possess these infallible symptoms of disease; as I dreaded his comparing my healthful but less attractive bloom and rounded figure, with the evanescent charms he so rapturously described.

"Have you no picture of her?" asked I, trembling lest he should draw forth from his breast, a treasured miniature carefully concealed from prying eyes.

"Yes," replied he, "I have an admirable resemblance of her, which you shall see, and which has never left my breast since I lost her, until you, fair and dear Arabella, listened to my suit."

I involuntarily placed my hand within his, at this acknowledgment; for I felt grateful for the delicacy of the renunciation of the portrait. Nay, in consideration of it I almost forgave the warmth of his praises of her; for, slight as the circumstance was, it made a great impression on me.

The next day, he brought the miniature, and though I had been prepared to expect beauty of no ordinary kind, I confess that the extreme loveliness of the portrait surprised—ay, and shall I own the truth?—displeased me. If I had previously indulged a jealousy of the fair Lucinda, what were my jealous pangs now, that I beheld the radiant beauty of her face? The artist had caught the almost seraphic expression of her countenance, that fine and elevated expression, where the purity of the angel seems to have already descended on the suffering saint. It wanted only a halo round the head, to be one of the best personifications of a martyred saint ascending to heaven; and I, even *I*, could not repress the tear that fell on the crystal that covered it, though the source whence it sprang was not free from alloy.

This apparent sympathy, while it rendered me dearer to Lord Clydesdale, lured him into a still more frequent recurrence to the object of his first love. He judged more favorably of me than I deserved, in imputing to me a freedom from that envy. and jealousy, from which so few of my sex are exempt; and I had not courage to risk the forfeiture of this good opinion, by acknowledging how little it was merited. Had I avowed my weakness, how much unhappiness should I not have escaped! But no, pride, the most dangerous passion which can approach love, forbade it; and I yielded to its unwise suggestions.

It was agreed between Lord Clydesdale, and myself, that our marriage should not take place until our return to England. But as we were considered affianced, we spent the greater part of every day together; and each day seemed to cement our mutual affection, as we drew plans for the future, and built castles in the air. Life is at best but a shadowy scene, some charm of which vanishes every day; the actual enjoyments, few and far between, often poisoned by untoward circumstances, or followed by painful regret. Are we not then wise, in creating for ourselves the innocent pleasure of fancy building? where Hope, the siren, helps to erect the structure, and almost cheats Reason into believing the possibility of its completion. Those were indeed blissful days! when beneath the blue skies of genial Italy, and wandering by the as blue waters of the Mediterranean sea that mirrored them, the balmy air of the delicious climate of Naples made its influence known by exhilarating our spirits, and diffusing its softness over our feelings. And yet the bliss was not unalloyed! When was that of mortals ever so? though each believes himself worthy of happiness, and likely, if not sure, to attain it.

The more tenderness Lord Clydesdale seemed to evince, and the more warmth I myself experienced, the more susceptible did I become of the assaults of the fiend jealousy; each successive attack lacerating my heart more cruelly. Every allusion to the lost Lucinda tortured me; and yet I had myself at the commencement encouraged these allusions. Now that I be-

lieved myself beloved, and felt with what passionate tenderness I repaid the affection of Lord Clydesdale, a recurrence to his former passion appeared an insult, and an injustice, that I was disposed to resent with an anger that required the exertion of all my reasoning powers to subdue.

At length I took courage, and asked him to let me have the portrait of Lucinda. He looked surprised—hesitated; and then demanded why I wished to possess it? I acknowledged that I considered it so exquisitely beautiful, that while it remained in his keeping I should always dread his contemplation of it might elicit comparisons highly disadvantageous to my own inferior attractions. This avowal drew from him some of those praises peculiar to love, which, however exaggerated, are never unacceptable; and he yielded the portrait, though with reluctance, on my solemn promise that it should be carefully guarded and considered a sacred deposit.

The possession of this long coveted treasure soothed and calmed the demon in my breast for many days; yet each time I gazed on it, the angelic softness and beauty of the countenance reillumined the nearly extinguished spark of jealousy in my mind. I have, after contemplating it long and attentively, sought my mirror, and tried to think the image it reflected was not so very far inferior to this captivating picture, as jealousy whispered it to be. But, alas! not all the suggestions of vanity could blind me to the immeasurable superiority of the countenance of Lucinda, that dead rival, who in her grave, as I fancied, still triumphed over me. It was true, my finely chiselled features and the perfect oval of my face might have contested with her the palm of beauty; but the expression—oh! how infinitely did mine fall short of hers! I forgot in contemplating my own countenance that the baleful passions of envy and jealousy which pervaded my heart at that moment, lent their disfiguring influence to my face. No wonder, then, that I was conscious of the vast difference between a physiognomy, expressive only of a heavenly calm, and that in which worldly and sinful feelings were delineated.

The sunshine produced by my lover's renunciation of the portrait had made itself manifest many days; when, one luckless evening, while seated on the balcony of the Palazzo we inhabited, and engaged in that dreamy, tender conversation into which lovers are prone to fall, on my expressing some doubt of the depth and devotion of his love, he passionately seized my hand, and exclaimed,

"Yes, adored Lucinda!—Arabella—I would say———"

"You need not complete the sentence," interrupted I, coldly; "it is but natural that the name of the object which is most dearly treasured in your memory should sometimes escape from your lips."

"This is unjust and cruel, Arabella," said he; "you know, or ought to know, how inexpressibly dear you are to my heart, when all its feelings, all its regrets, have been bared to your view. Why have you deceived me by an apparent sympathy, if you could not bear with an occasional, an involuntary recurrence to the past?"

The gentleness of his reproach, which had so much more of sorrow than of anger in it, disarmed my displeasure. I felt ashamed of my petulance, and had an instinctive presentiment that by this selfish ebullition I had forfeited some portion of his esteem.

"I should be unworthy of your affection, dearest Arabella," resumed he, "were I capable of deceiving you by asserting that I ever could banish the memory of her who in life was so beloved. But that memory, mournful though it be, precludes not the fondest, truest affection for you. Nay, you should consider the constancy of my attachment to one in her grave, as a gage of that which shall bind me to the only being on earth who could console me for her loss."

I refused not the hand he now pressed to his lips; a few kind words and gentle tears on my part marked our renewed amity, and we parted that night as lovers part after a reconciliation of their first misunderstanding; for the harsh name of quarrel I could not give it.

But, though we met in fondness next day, and every day for many weeks, confidence was banished between us. The name of Lucinda, or any reference to her, never escaped his lips; but this self-imposed silence and constraint tortured me more than his former lavish praises or tender regrets had ever done. The demon jealousy whispered, that though the name was banished from his lips, her image had become more tenaciously fixed in his heart; and that an opinion of my selfishness and want of self-control had led to this reserve and increased seriousness on his part. This conviction haunted and goaded me; yet I dared not trust myself to utter a word of it to him. I feared to sink

still lower in his estimation, or to be hurried into some expression of harshness that might lead to a serious misunderstanding, perhaps a rupture; and such a result, even in moments of the greatest mental excitement, I dared not contemplate, so warm and fervent was my attachment to him.

How narrowly, and with what lynx eyes, did I examine his countenance every day when we met. A shade of sadness on his brow, or an involuntary sigh, angered me; they were received as incontrovertible proofs that his thoughts were on my dead rival.

Our *tête-à-têtes* were no longer marked by that outpouring of the soul, that boundless confidence, which had formerly existed between us; and both were conscious of this change, though anxious to conceal it from each other. His conversation now referred wholly to the future; he avoided all reference to his past life, as if it had been stained by some crime of deep die; and I felt as if there was a gulf between us—that is, between our souls' communion. The consciousness of this gulf having been created by my own waywardness, added to the bitterness of my feelings; I became silent and abstracted; and though he was never ceasing in his attentions, the sense of our mutual constraint now robbed them of their greatest charm in my estimation.

It was at this period that Sir Augustus Fauconberg, an intimate friend of Lord Clydesdale, arrived at Naples. He established himself in the same hotel with him, and was presented to us. He was one or two years senior to Lord Clydesdale, and remarkably good looking, accomplished and agreeable. His presence was a relief to us all; for his vivacity, though finely tempered by good-breeding, never failed to enliven those with whom he associated. A short time before, I should have considered the presence of a stranger in our limited circle as an unwelcome interruption to the frequent *tête-á-têtes* I enjoyed with my affianced husband; for Lady Walsingham devoted much of her time to feminine occupations, and left us much alone; but now, those *tête-á-têtes* had lost their chief attraction. The chain of love still bound us, but the flowers that wreathed and concealed its links had, one by one, withered and dropped off. Neither of us wished for freedom, nor dared anticipate division, but all the sweetness of love had departed; we were not happy together, and yet we dreaded to try if we could support separation.

One evening I had remarked with anger, blended with sorrow, that Lord Clydesdale appeared to be more than usually depressed. Instead of soothing him by kindness, I maintained a sullen silence; and even when he bade us adieu for the night, I returned not the pressure of his hand, but suffered mine to remain cold and passive within his grasp, as if it had been a lifeless substance.

My heart reproached me for this unkindness during the night; and I made good resolves for the coming day. Indeed, so salutary were my reflections, that I determined henceforth to conquer my waywardness; and by resuming my former confiding tenderness, win back his.

I longed, impatiently longed, for his visit; I counted the hours that must intervene before the arrival of that which usually brought him to our Palazzo; and attired myself with more than my accustomed care, that I might appear more attractive in his eyes. I seemed to awake from a disagreeable dream; and the recollection of my own too frequent fits of silence and sullenness, to which his forbearing gentleness, and constant affection, formed a striking contrast; rose up to reproach me. Yes, I would amply repay him for all my past suspicions and unkindness, and never more give way to them. In this frame of mind I left my chamber. My mirror told me, that never had I looked more attractive. I had attired myself in his favorite colors, wore a bracelet and ring, his gifts, and, with a throbbing heart, awaited his coming.

Hour after hour elapsed, and he appeared not; a thousand vague forebodings of evil haunted me—I could settle to no occupation, but kept continually walking on the balcony that overlooked the street by which he must approach, in order to catch a glance of him.

At length, Lady Walsingham entered the saloon; and observed that she had thought Lord Clydesdale was there. When informed that I had not seen him, she appeared really uneasy; for, though she then mentioned not the report to me, she had that morning heard that an epidemic disease had, during the last few days, been making great ravages in the town; and, consequently, coupled his unusual absence with this startling intelligence. A servant was instantly despatched to the hotel where Lord Clydesdale resided, to inquire

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"When did the note arrive?" demanded Sir Augustus.

"Only a short time before you entered."

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"No other," answered I, still weeping.

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"Most certainly," replied Fauconberg; "but rather more serious than usual, which I attributed to the recollection that this day was the second anniversary of the death of a person once dear to him; every recurrence to whom his friends avoid, knowing the subject to be fraught with pain to him."

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thousand pangs. So, while, I reckless of observation, exposed my love and anguish, at the bare thought of his danger, to the gaze of others, *he*, having voluntarily excluded himself from my presence, was weeping over the memory of another love, and leaving me to endure all the alarm and wretchedness which his acknowledgment of indisposition could not fail to excite. The subterfuge too, of affecting illness—it was unworthy—it was base! The whole current of my feelings became changed. Such conduct was not to be borne. No, I would, whatever the effort might cost me, break with him forever; and his friend, Sir Augustus Fauconberg, who had been a spectator of my weakness, when I believed him ill, should now be a witness of the firmness with which I could eternally resign him.

Such were the thoughts that flitted through my troubled brain, making my temples throb, and my heart's pulses beat in feverish excitement. I silenced every whisper of love, every dictate of reason. Pride, ungovernable pride, and indomitable jealousy, now took entire possession of my heart, banishing every gentle and feminine emotion. If, a short time before, while suffering agonies at the bare notion of my lover's illness, any one had told me that the assurance of his being well, could fail to convey to me the most ecstatic joy, I should have pronounced the fulfilment of the prediction impossible. There is nothing to which I would not have cheerfully submitted to have had this blissful assurance. But now—it only gave me torture, and excited rage. Such are the revolutions to which evil passions can lead those who are so unfortunate as to submit to their empire!

I sought my chamber, and giving way to my wild and wrathful impulse, seized a pen, and wrote to Lord Clydesdale to declare that I considered our engagement at an end. I stated that my determination was irrevocable, and that any attempt to change it would be as unavailing as offensive to me.

I despatched this ill-judged and intemperate letter, proud of this supposed conquest over self, this triumph of my evil nature over my better. I would not wait for a calmer moment, lest my heart might relent, and be disposed to pardon him, who was still dear to it. No, while mourning a *dead* mistress, he should have cause to grieve for a *living* one; and I was obdurate enough to take a malicious pleasure in thus overwhelming him with a new affliction, while he was meditating on a former one.

I never reflected that the excuse of a slight indisposition, urged by Lord Clydesdale to account for not coming on that day, was only made to avoid offending me, by candidly stating the true cause of his absence. It was my injustice, my petulance, that compelled him to have recourse to this deception, a deception adopted only to spare my weakness. I expected to receive a deprecating answer to my angry renunciation of him notwithstanding my prohibition; nay more, I was not without hopes that he would come to plead his cause in person. But as hour after hour elapsed, without bringing any tidings of him, I began to tremble at heart, though I affected a careless exterior, at the probable consequences of my own folly.

Lady Walsingham, with that intuitive perception which belongs exclusively to women had penetrated the state of my feelings. She deplored, but pitied their wilfulness; and gently endeavored to soothe them. She dwelt on the compassion and forbearance due to the regrets of those who mourn an object beloved, even though a brighter prospect opens on the bereaved heart, by a new attachment.

"But, if the former object be still mourned," answered I, "why should the mourner seek another love? Such a course is being unfaithful to the dead and unjust to the living."

"You are yet too young, dear Arabella," replied Lady Walsingham, "to have fathomed the secret recesses of the human heart, in which the desire of happiness is indigenous and indestructible. If robbed of the object of its affection, the grief that follows, though deep and sometimes durable, is not eternal. The regret, which, during the first bitterness attending such a calamity, was violent and engrossing, becomes by the operation of time every day mitigated. The lover is conscious of this gradual change; and at first shrinks from what he believes to be an infirmity of his nature. He summons memory, with all her potent spells, to awaken the grief that slumbers; he dwells upon all the charms of the lost one, recalls all her love; and imagination, excited by recollection, supplies the place, and for a brief space, enacts the part of grief. Gratitude aids this self-deception, which is peculiar to fine natures; the lost are thought of, talked of, and referred to, with tenderness, long after the survivor is consoled for their loss: nay, he frequently perseveres in

premeditatedly offering this homage to the manes of the departed as an expiation for an involuntary oblivion of them. You know not, and may you never know, dear Arabella, the shame, the tender regret, and self-reproach, with which a sensitive mind first becomes sensible that it *can* be consoled for a loss, the regret for which, when first experienced, was imagined to be eternal. But when the place once occupied by the departed, is usurped by a new perhaps a dearer object—for grief increases the suspectibility, and tends to make the second attachment more fond than the former—in proportion to the sensitiveness of the feelings of the lover, will be the recollections given to the dead; recollections that do not rob the living of the slightest portion of his tenderness, but which rather originate in his deep consciousness of the force of his present attachment. He who devoted not a pensive thought to the memory of a buried love, will never be capable of fidelity to a living one. Such regrets are not the offspring of sorrow; they are the funeral flowers with which, while animated by hope of happiness, the survivor decks the grave of one for whose loss he is consoled."

My feelings became softened towards Lord Clydesdale, as I listened to the mild reasoning of Lady Walsingham; and when she informed me that his friend Sir Augustus Fauconberg had acknowledged to her, that he never imagined Lord Clydesdale could have loved again, so tenderly devoted had he been to his first attachment, and so fondly was it repaid by its object, I severely blamed my own wilfulness in having inflicted pain, where I should have offered consolation. Oh, how I longed for him to come, or write, to deprecate the anger which was now subdued, that I might convince him of my repentance and affection! Every noise in the ante-room made my heart throb, every step that approached I hoped might be his; and in this belief I have started from my chair to meet him with an extended hand, and words of love hovering on my lips.

Lady Walsingham, anxious to make an impression on me, related all that Sir Augustus Fauconberg had told her, of the personal charms, cultivated mind, and angelic disposition of Lady Lucinda Harcourt. She dwelt on the profound tenderness of this young and lovely creature for her betrothed husband; and on the heavenly resignation with which she prepared herself for another world, though blessed with all that could render existence desirable. She related the long and lingering illness, and the death-bed farewell of this fair being; and the overwhelming affliction of her affianced husband, who fled from England, to seek in a strange land the power of supporting a blow, that seemed to have for ever destroyed his earthly hopes.

When she described the satisfaction experienced by Fauconberg, at discovering from Lord Clydesdale that his heart had yielded to a second attachment, in which he looked forward to the enjoyment of the happiness he had believed to have been lost to him for ever, I could not restrain my tears; and, as they flowed plenteously down my cheeks, I felt that I had never loved Lord Clydesdale so fondly as at that moment. Had he then entered, yes, proud as I was, I would have confessed my fault, and atoned for it, by every future effort to control the waywardness of my nature, and the petulance of my temper. Alas! such happiness was not in store for me. I had madly dashed the cup from my lip: and it was decreed that it should never more be offered!

But let me not anticipate my story. The long evening wore away, without bringing me any tidings of my lover. How did I count the weary hours, on the dial of that pendule, on which I had so often marked their rapid flight, when, after a long visit, he rose to depart, and I disbelieved that the hour of separation was yet come! How often during that interminable evening had I resolved to write to him, and seek a reconciliation; but pride, and it may be, female reserve, prohibited this concession. Though supported by the hope that the morrow would see him at my feet, still my heart was troubled that the sun should have gone down on our anger; and that our estrangement should have endured a single night.

Even now, though half a century has elapsed since that night, I have not forgotten the tender remorse, the good resolves, and the overflowing affection with which I dwelt on his noble qualities, and my own unworthiness. For the first time, my tears flowed for her, who had preceded me in his heart, as I pictured her to myself in all her youth and beauty, in all her gentleness and love, descending to the untimely grave, whence he could not save her. All that I now experienced of affection for him, she had felt; and in giving my tears to her memory, I seemed to be shedding them for myself, such an identity did my now altered feelings appear to create between our sentiments. Yes, I would for the future

partake his recollections of her; her name should be a sacred bond of union and sympathy between us. I would think of her as a dear, a lost sister, and emulate him in guarding her sweet memory from oblivion. With these gentle thoughts I sank into slumber, and awoke to—despair.

Never did the sun shine with greater splendor, or on a more lovely scene, than presented itself to my eyes, on awaking the morning after my fatal letter to Lord Clydesdale. I hailed the bright sky, as an omen of reconciliation—of happiness; and my spirits rose from the weight that had oppressed them, as I joyfully anticipated an interview with him so dear to me. I had only completed my toilette, when a letter, bearing a superscription in his well-known writing, was presented to me, and I pressed it to my lips before breaking the seal, so impressed was I with the thought that it was to announce his visit. Alas! I had only perused a few lines, when the fatal truth stood revealed, and *I* was a desolate, a deserted woman. Even while I was cheating myself with joyful anticipations of our meeting, nay, chiding the tardy moments that intervened, he, on whom my soul doted with all the fervor of youthful love, was hurrying from me with cruel haste! and now was many, many miles distant. He no longer breathed the same air with me—and yet I was unconscious of this change!

O prescience! vainly attributed to the sympathy of affection, never more could I put faith in thee! when no secret foreboding whispered me that *he* was flying from me; when no perceptible alteration in my being warned me that the most fatal hour of my life was at hand!

And he could leave me, without one word of adieu, one last lingering look of love! Too, too well had he obeyed my imperious, my fatal mandate to see me no more. Why—oh! why, had he not sought me! one word, one look would have banished every harsh feeling between us. But no, he accepted (nay, perhaps had eagerly desired) the first opportunity of breaking the bond that united us. My peevishness and unreasonable jealousy had wearied and disgusted him; he foresaw that our union could not tend to our mutual happiness, and he burst the chain that my folly and wilfulness had rendered so galling. Yes, the fault was wholly mine: and deeply, incessantly did I expiate it, by a despair that tolled the eternal knell of my departed hopes.

In bitterness of spirit, I turned from the bright sun, whose splendor but an hour before I had blessed as an omen of happiness. Now its brilliancy was as a mockery to the darkness that veiled my soul: I shut out its light, and having secured myself from interruption, by locking the door of my chamber, I gave way to the poignant sorrow that filled my breast almost to suffocation, in a paroxysm of tears. I wept in uncontrollable anguish until the violence of my emotions had nearly subdued my physical force. At some moments, forgetful of all but my love, and despair, I determined on pursuing him; on seeking an explanation, and on beseeching him to let my recent conduct pass into oblivion. Yes, I would tell him all that I had suffered within the last twenty-four hours; and all the atonement I had determined on making, for the uneasiness I had caused him. Surely, when he was acquainted that my unreasonable jealousy was but the effect of love, he would overlook, he would pardon the folly and injustice into which it had hurried me.

Such were the thoughts that passed rapidly through my mind, and as they presented themselves, I rose from the couch, on which in my despair I had thrown myself, with the resolution of communicating my intention of seeking him to Lady Walsingham. But then came the suggestions of reason, of delicacy, of pride, to my aid; and, shall I own it? those of the last mentioned passion were the most potent in guiding my decision. How could I announce to the modest, the dignified Lady Walsingham, that, casting aside the maidenly reserve which befitted me, I was about to pursue a lover who fled from me! No, this was impossible; I would not, I *could* not, bring myself to such a degradation. But no sooner had I decided on the utter impracticability of this last delusive whisper of hope, than despair took possession of my tortured heart, and I gave way to all its wild, its unholy dictates, until reason reeled on her throne, and my brain throbbed in agony.

I perused again and again my lover's epistle; its gentleness touched me more than the strongest remonstrances could have done, and rendered the writer dearer to me than ever. Here is the letter, which I have carefully preserved, though some of the words it contains were half effaced by my tears. It was long ere I could read it unmoved, but time blunts the arrows of affliction, or else it renders us more callous to their assaults.

"This letter will be given to you, dear,

too dear Arabella, when I shall be many miles distant. You have commanded me to see you no more, and I obey; my reluctance being only vanquished by the belief, that such a step, painful as it is to me, will best secure your future peace.

"When I saw you first, my heart was, as I imagined, dead to love. Your beauty, your fascination, soon convinced me of my error; but even when I discovered my weakness, I endeavored to steel myself against the entertainment of a second affection, lest you, in all the pride of youth and beauty's first triumphs, should reject the offering of a heart, that had already experienced for another a deep, a true passion. But your gentleness, your apparent pity, rivetted the chains your charms had forged; and I placed my happiness in your hands, and dared again to indulge hope for the future. The consciousness of the strength of my new attachment, induced me to reveal to its object the sorrows created by a former one. I related them as the mariner when safe in a haven of rest narrates to the person most dear to him, the perils he has endured when absent from her, and for which he looks to her for consolation. I had no thought, no feeling concealed from you; and the extent of my confidence must have assured you of that of my affection. When mistress of every sentiment of my heart, judge of my bitter disappointment at discovering that your manner towards me became totally changed. Coldness and constraint usurped the place of confidence and sympathy; and I found myself compelled either to conceal the fond recollection of the dead, or to offend the living object of my tenderness. Such was my attachment to you, that I adopted the first alternative. I scrupulously avoided speaking of the past; and this anxiety not to displease you, led to a restraint that impaired, if it did not destroy, all the charm of our intercourse. Day after day I marked your increasing coldness; yet still I had not courage to depart; and by my absence rid you of communion that seemed to importune, rather than gratify you. You have broken the bond that united us; you, cruel Arabella, have pronounced the sentence of separation, and I leave you with every wound bleeding anew, opened by the hand that I once thought had closed them for ever. Pardon this intrusion, which you forbade; and may every happiness be yours.

"CLYDESDALE."

Lady Walsingham had frequently tried to gain admittance to my chamber during the long hours that had elapsed since I had shut myself in it; but I resisted all her entreaties to open the door, until a late hour in the evening, when, exhausted by the effects of mental and bodily suffering, I allowed her to enter.

All the soothing attentions that an affectionate heart and feeling mind could offer, were showered on me by this amiable and most excellent woman; who bore the wayward petulance attendant on this my cruel and self-incurred disappointment, with a gentleness and patience that in some degree restored me to a sense of shame for my want of self-control. I reposed in her sympathising breast all the circumstances which had led to the misunderstanding with Lord Clydesdale, anticipating that she would encourage the hope that still animated me, by whispering that he might return, and our union yet take place. But she held out no such delusive prospect; she had seen enough of him to be convinced, that the step he had taken was the result of a belief, that, however temporarily painful it might be, the separation was necessary to our mutual peace; and that therefore his determination would be immutable.

This conduct on the part of Lady Walsingham was as wise as it was merciful. By destroying hope, she disarmed love of its most potent ally: and after a few weeks, I learned to reflect on my disappointment with less bitterness; though, for years, it cast a cloud of melancholy over the sunshine of my young life, and is even still remembered with sadness. I tried to think that Lord Clydesdale and I were unsuited to each other, that our union could not have been productive of happiness; but, alas! conscience whispered that *he* was faultless, and that all the error was on *my* side.

Pride now reminded me, that, though with a bruised heart and wounded spirit, I was still called on to enact a part in the drama of life. I was a fair and wealthy heiress, on whom all eyes were fixed; and must not permit even the most insignificant of the herd who sought my society, to imagine, that any one who had been known to have worn my chains, could throw them off. Lord Clydesdale was universally considered to be my devoted admirer, but had never been publicly acknowledged as my accepted suitor; consequently, his departure was not likely to

lead to any surmises derogatory to my dignity, unless I betrayed by any alteration in my general demeanor, that it affected me. What sacrifices does pride exact from her victims! sacrifices that less unworthy motives have never obtained. Reason—nay, religion itself, have rarely had such influence in quelling grief, or at least in checking its external symptoms, as has this unbridled, this all subduing passion. At its dictates the tear is dried, the sob is stifled, the sigh is sent back ere half breathed to the oppressed heart; the quiver of agony is banished from the lip, nay it is forced into the indication of a cheerful smile, and gaiety is assumed, while the heart is pining in anguish rendered more intolerable by the mockery to which its wretched owner is compelled.

In obedience to this all-commanding power, I schooled myself to appear more gay and careless than I had ever been at any previous period. Yet often did I start at the sound of my own laugh, to which my tortured breast seemed to render funeral echoes, as even while the smile played on my lip, my thoughts were far distant, wandering with him whose image was never banished from my heart. Frequently have I left a brilliant re-union, where I seemed to constitute the magnet of attraction, and retired to my solitary chamber to weep over the recollection of the past. No, there is no slavery so insupportable as that which we impose on ourselves to cheat those who perhaps care little for us, and for whom we care not.

Many of the persons whose attentions Lord Clydesdale's presence and assiduities had checked, now returned to importune me with them. Among those whose pretensions to please least annoyed, though they totally failed to interest me, were Il Principe di Monte Rosso, and his *fidus Achates*, Il Duca di Carditella. Both these nobles professed a chivalrous adoration for me, worthy the days of romance, and displayed it *a la Neapolitan*. They sang duets beneath my balcony at night; their boats followed mine in the evenings over the moonlight sea; and the lava of Vesuvius, their native volcano, whose flames their own for me professed to emulate, was offered to me in every shape into which the ingenuity of art could torture it, to remind me of their *tendresse*. Such was their attention to my comfort, though that was a word as unknown to their southern ears as the reality was to their habits, that on one occasion, when Lady Walsingham observed that the butter provided by our major domo was of a very objectionable quality, Il Principe declared that the superintendant of his villa sold the best butter in all the neighborhood of Naples, and recommended it so zealously that we knew not precisely which he wished most to serve, his farmer or myself. Il Duca di Carditella frequently assured us that the wine sold by the porter at his Palazzo, and made from the vines on his estate, was superior to all other, and even urged our servant to give it a trial. I figured to myself an English Duke puffing his own wine or butter to engage purchasers, and, above all, to the lady of his love; and could not resist smiling at the contrast between such conduct and the sonorous and ancient titles of the perpetrators. Whenever Il Principe sighed, and this was not seldom, Il Duca echoed: each compliment that one offered at the shrine of my beauty, and each profession of the profound sentiment which that beauty had excited, was repeated nearly verbatim by the other, without the least apparent embarrassment to either.

These modern Pylades and Orestes always came and departed together; and their mutual harmony seemed in no way impeded by the passion they professed to entertain for the same object. There was something so singular in this *brotherhood* in love, that though it failed to interest, it succeeded in sometimes amusing me.

One day when Il Principe was calling all the saints in the calendar, even St. Januarius himself, to witness how perfectly he adored me, and Il Duca was strenuously emulating him in his vows, I inquired, with as serious a face as I could assume, how, in case I should, by any possibility, (though I admitted not the probability of such an event,) prefer one to the other, the rejected suitor could support the disappointment; or the accepted one be so selfish as to enjoy a boon of which his brother in love had been deprived.

"Let not such a reflection oppose a single obstacle to your decision, charming lady," exclaimed both, nearly in the same words, "for we have sworn that he who becomes your husband, shall select the other for your *cavalier servénte*."

Strange to say, neither of my admirers seemed to be aware of having said aught that could either shock or surprise me; and would have considered any expression of such feelings on my part as a proof of northern barbarism and prejudice.

After visiting all the principal places of resort in Italy, and passing above four

years in that beautiful land, we returned to our own country; with my notions of happiness considerably changed, and my hopes of attaining it, oh! how infinitely diminished; and yet my heart beat quicker too, when I found myself again on my native shore. I concluded that *he* who was so often and fondly recalled to my memory must be there, that we should in all human probability meet: and what might not a meeting accomplish between hearts that still loved? for, judging his by my own, I concluded that I still occupied a place in it. But, even should we *not* meet, was it not a blessing to inhabit the same country, breathe the same air, and know that a few hours might bring us together? Those only who have truly loved will comprehend this negative sort of happiness; but *they* will know that even this is eagerly grasped at, and will appreciate its effects on me.

I was now of age; and that important epoch was to be marked by *fêtes* and rejoicings at Walsingham Castle, where I was to receive my neighbors, and feast my tenantry and dependants. Previous to going there, Lady Walsingham and I accepted an invitation to the rectory of her brother, who, with his pretty wife and three rosy cheeked children, we found in the enjoyment of as much happiness as, perhaps, was ever permitted to mortals. I might also add as much health, if that advantage was not an essential requisite in the other blessing, there being no happiness without it. The fact was, the felicity accorded to this excellent couple had been so wholly free from anxiety, or any of the trials to which persons of susceptible natures are liable, that the result had been an increase of *embonpoint* to both; more indicative of rude health than advantageous to beauty.

On looking at Frederick Melville, the once pale, interesting, but now lusty and fresh coloured father of a family, I could scarcely forbear a smile at the recollection of my former girlish predilection for him. How inferior, how immeasurably inferior was he to Lord Clydesdale, in appearance as well as in manner. This alteration in his looks, but still more, the total change in my own taste and opinions, led me to reflect on the folly of permitting girls to marry the first object that attracts their juvenile fancy; without allowing a reasonable time to elapse, in order that the stability of the sentiment may be ascertained. How few young women would at twenty select the admirer as a partner for life who might have captivated them at seventeen? and how many of the desperate passions, supposed to be eternal, would fade away like a dream before the influence of reason, if subjected to the ordeal of a couple, or of even one year's absence.

The happiness of Frederick Melville and his wife was much too unimaginative and common-place for my refined notions. The *ideal* colored every vision I formed of domestic life, and entered into every scheme of enjoyment. I shrank from the realities of actual existence to revel in day dreams; and in the superabundance of my folly recoiled from the possibility of ever finding myself reduced to the level of Mrs. Melville, a homely, busy, but most happy wife. Their daily occupations and simple pleasure seemed insipid and tiresome to me. Their intellectual recreations were limited to the *utile*, rather than to the exalted and elegant in literature; and their routine of usefulness, and absence of high thought, the epithet with which I dignified the sentiments engendered by study of poetry and belle letters, allowed the countenance of both to wear an habitual expression of cheerfulness rather than of sensibility.

In the vanity of self-imagined superiority, I fancied my mind to be of a too elevated character to be content with a blameless lot like theirs; erroneously believing the morbid fastidiousness of my ill-directed feelings, to be an indubitable proof of this supposed superiority, when it clearly indicated precisely the reverse: as the factitious bodily force sometimes exhibited in delirium, is by the ignorant, mistaken for constitutional strength.

When after a morning passed in the perusal of my favorite authors, among whom the most romantic school of poets were the preferred, I have found Mrs. Melville, with health glowing on her cheek, and the vivacity it inspires beaming in her eyes, returned from visiting the poor, or superintending her domestic arrangements, I have pitied her destiny, and almost despised the mind that could be happy under it. The vigorous discharge of actual duties, I was as indisposed to comprehend, as unwilling to perform; consequently, I undervalued those who did both. Great sacrifices, I fancied, I should heroically make; but the minor ones, which we are constantly called on to offer, and for which no praise is given, appeared to me to be beneath my attention. It is thus that too many people console themselves for leav-

ing unfulfilled the numerous duties, the discharge of which cheer and sweeten life, while the great sacrifice they suppose themselves ready to make, is perhaps never required. To preside over a husband's household, attend to his personal comforts, nurse his children, visit the poor, pray *with*, and work *for* them, and receive him always with joyful *smiles*, was, in my opinion, to become that most uninteresting of all creatures, a homely housewife. Consequently, I deemed that it argued ill for the taste and refinement of Frederick Melville, that his attachment to his wife seemed to increase in proportion to her indefatigable discharge of this dull and vulgar routine of duties.

I had figured the Parsonage to myself as an old-fashioned house, modernised into a simple, but elegant villa, with myrtles, woodbine, and roses, peeping into each window. The furniture light, tasteful, and luxurious:—no splendor, but all that persons of refined habits could require. The picture I formed, comprised a small but most comfortable drawing-room, opening into a conservatory redolent of sweets—a library containing the choicest authors—a boudoir, with all its fairy elegancies, and an Æolian harp placed in its window, to catch the sighing of the night breeze on its strings. I fancied all the decorations peculiar to female taste, and all the graceful implements indicative of feminine occupation. Each apartment was to be filled with rare flowers, and the presiding deity, simply, but most becomingly attired, was to languidly, but sweetly, do the honors of this imaginary little Paradise; repaying her husband for a thousand nameless attentions—not by the bustling activity of a housekeeper, but by the gentle smiles and soft words peculiar to heroines in novels.

This was the picture my fancy had drawn of Addlethorp Rectory; though the name had always jarred on my ear, and suggested the necessity of bestowing on the spot a more euphonious denomination. The married lovers must, according to my notions, in the constant communion of thought and study, have grown somewhat paler, and more pensive—that palor arising from deep thought, and that pensiveness which excess of happiness produces on high-toned minds, by making them tremble for its duration.

How, then, were my expectations disappointed by the reality of Addlethorp Rectory and its owners! Instead of a modernised villa, a square, red, brick mansion, met my view. No myrtles, woodbine, or roses, peeped into the windows; and the green boxes of mignonette which supplied their places, odorous though they were, seemed to me, to be but a sorry substitute. The garden into which the windows of the principal rooms opened, might have satisfied even my fastidious taste; but those rooms sadly shocked my notions of elegance and comfort—shining oak panels, and book cases to correspond, stowed with volumes of no rich hues of binding, were its most conspicuous features. No mirrors were to be seen, and no silk draperies met the eye; but white dimity curtains, with chairs, and a sofa that seemed to have been made before the possibility of reclining in it had been taken into consideration; for its form and texture defied such a position. A work table, on which was placed a basket well filled with non-descript pieces of linen, ycleped plain work, and all the homely apparatus of a village sempstress, lay by it.

To be sure, the room was scrupulously clean and cheerful, and wanted nothing for positive use, though it contained no article for mere ornament. Still, its rustic plainness struck me as being disagreeable; and the increased plumpness and gaiety of its owners, shocked my preconceived notions. The whole house and its arrangement were equally plain and simple. Every thing was perfectly clean, but all of the cheapest texture and most simple form. I could have fancied myself in the dwelling of some primitive quaker, who disdained ornament or elegance: yet never had I beheld in the most splendid saloons, rich in all that unbounded wealth and refined taste could lavish on them, such happy faces as in the homely parlor of Addlethorp Rectory.

The conversation of the rector and his wife was little calculated to excite any interest in a mind teeming with all the morbid sentiments that filled mine. To hear that old Farmer Brookby's health was much amended; Dame Gateby's leg not broken, as was supposed; and poor Martha Dobson's case not so hopeless as was feared, only excited in me *ennui* and dissatisfaction, while this intelligence created in Mr. and Mrs. Melville the most lively interest. The rapid progress which her pupils at the charity school were making; the good qualities of the curate and his wife; and thankfulness to Providence for having placed her lot among such good people, were the themes most frequently

chosen by Mrs. Melville, while she plied her needle; little aware how callous a listener she had for her "short and simple annals of the poor;" but to which Lady Walsingham lent no cold ear.

"I see no harp here," said I, one day, to Mrs. Melville, during our short *séjour* in the parsonage—"I remember you excelled on that instrument."

"It is an expensive acquisition," replied she; "and as I have a piano forte, I thought it more prudent not to purchase a harp. Besides, the truth is, I should not have had time to practise; for what with my household avocations, my children, my school, my garden, and, though last nor least, my poor, I find little spare time for music."

"But does not all this daily recurrence of occupation weary and depress you? I should soon sink under it, I am sure."

"O! dear, no; on the contrary, it keeps me more cheerful; for the consciousness of endeavoring to fulfil one's duties, exhilarates the spirits."

"But do you not feel very solitary and dull, when Mr. Melville is compelled to be absent?"

"It is true, I miss his presence very much at the hours at which we are accustomed to meet; but I have so many things to attend to, that I have not leisure to be dull. Besides, I look forward with such delight to his return, and have so many little preparations to make to welcome him, that this occupation alone would sustain my cheerfulness."

"May I, without being indiscreet, inquire in what consist these preparations?"

"In a thousand trifling things, which, though trifling, nevertheless, have a lively interest for those who are fondly attached to each other."

Come, come, thought I to myself, all the romance of love is not yet over. Here, amid all the duties, I shall hear of some little schemes of pleasure, some delicate attentions, such as placing fresh flowers in his room; or surprising him with some unexpected little gift of affection. Yes, yes, housewife as she is, she is still a woman at heart, and has not forgotten all the sentiment of love.

"But you have not yet told me your preparations," resumed I.

"Well, then, to commence. Imprimis: I make some new article of dress for him: shirts, cravats, bands, gown, or, in short, any thing he may require; and which I know he will wear with double pleasure as being made by me. I teach the baby some new word, and the eldest a hymn that he will like to hear. I copy out, in a large hand, some of his sermons; prepare different little articles of confectionary to which he is partial and endeavor, as well as I can, to supply his place to his parishioners—thus occupied, time passes imperceptibly."

"But do your thoughts never revert to a more gay life, to a more brilliant position?"

"Never, I assure you; who would not prefer happiness to gaiety, and comfort to splendor? I possess both; and most thankful am I for such inestimable blessings."

"It has occured to me more than once since I have been here, dear Mrs. Melville, that your dwelling might be rendered more elegant—more worthy of its inmates."

"I am sorry you do not like Addlethorp Rectory; we are very partial to it; and no wonder, we have been so happy here"—and she looked around, as if she loved the very walls, and the clumsy, tasteless furniture.

"You mistake me, dear Mrs. Melville; I do not dislike your residence; I only wish it possessed more elegance—more of those luxurious comforts that one sees in the generality of houses. For instance, I would have the red brick front that makes one hot to look at it, concealed by parasitical plants. This apartment should be enlarged by two projecting bay windows, opening into the garden. That settee should give place to a comfortable lounger sofa, well lined with eiderdown pillows; two bergéres should fill up the space occupied by yonder straight backed chairs, that forbid ease; a carpet of such an ample pile, that no footstep could be heard to fall on it, should replace this one, and a mirror or two should reflect back the treasures of the garden. A sober tinted silk should form the curtains and covers of the chairs and sofa, instead of that cold and cheerless looking white dimity; and a few light and elegant tables and consoles with richly bound books scattered over them, should give the finish."

"The room would doubtless gain much by your proposed change of decoration, dear Lady Arabella; but would it then be as suitable for the wife of a minister of the Gospel?"

"Do you then imagine that elegance is incompatible with religion?"

"By no means; I only think that a clergyman and his wife should set the example of humility to those with whom

example has more effect than precept; and that lessons on the advantages of that virtue from the pulpit, might fail to make the desired impression, if the residence of the preacher was known to abound in those luxuries against an indulgence in which he warned his hearers. But, independent of this motive, the expense of the alterations you suggest would offer an insuperable objection."

"I imagined that Mr. Melville's benefice brought in a considerable revenue."

"So it does; one amply sufficient to gratify our simple tastes, enable us to ameliorate the condition of our poor parishioners, and lay by a modest provision for our children. But were we to indulge in the expensive luxuries you propose, our means, ample as they are, would be inadequate to these objects; and the fine things you speak of would only serve to reproach us for the sacrifice of our duties and principles, at the shrine of a vanity which in us would be worldly and culpable. It is very natural for Lady Arabella Walsingham, born and nursed in the bosom of wealth and splendor, to think the elegancies of life to which she has ever been accustomed essentially necessary to her personal comfort; but for us, their absence is no privation."

"*Chacun a son goût*," thought I, by no means satisfied with the result of my suggestions.

"But you have not told me," resumed I, "why you do not conceal the red brick front of the house, by parasitical plants?"

"Merely because they engender insects that fill the rooms and annoy the children."

"What," thought I, "submit to behold that fiery looking front, staring one in the face, when it might be concealed, because the plants breed insects that annoy children; really this is being very considerate."

I knew not the heart of a mother: I was unworthy of such a boon, and in my egotistical vanity, believed myself, with all my over-weening selfishness, superior to the excellent person before me.

I left Addlethorp Rectory without regret; and during my journey to Walsingham Castle, listened silently to Lady Walsingham's occasional comments on the happiness of her brother and his family; a happiness so little suited to my taste as to create no envy in my breast.

Every inn where we stopped to change horses during the last day of our route poured forth its inmates to stare at and welcome the owner of Walsingham Castle. At a few miles distance from it, a cavalcade of the tenantry, headed by my steward met me: and, notwithstanding my resistance, unharnessed the horses and drew the carriage to my paternal home, amid the joyful acclamations of a vast concourse of people.

I had not seen this abode since my infancy, and retained no recollection of it, consequently its feudal splendor now struck me with delight. A flag emblazoned with the Walsingham arms proudly floated from the ramparts; the bells of three neighboring churches tolled merrily, and the wives and daughters of my tenantry, attired in their Sunday clothes, stood courtesying to the ground, while they offered *bouquets* of flowers, enough to have filled at least a dozen carriages. A new sense of my own importance was now added to my other vanities. I looked proudly around me, acknowledged by dignified bows the homage that was offered to me.

How easy it is for the rich to make themselves beloved! A few gracious smiles had already won the hearts of those good people, who rent the air with shouts of applause. When I entered the hall, I paused, overcome with delight, at the grandeur of its appearance. Coats of mail, helmets, shields, and arms, crowned with the armorial banners of the family, were ranged along its lofty walls; and an oriel window of ancient stained glass, through which the setting sun threw its bright rays, diffused a variety of the most gorgeous hues over the polished steel of the armor, and the marble pavement of the hall. Here were assembled the gray-headed servitors of my father, with good Mistress Mary at their head, all blessing and welcoming me to my home. I fancied myself invested with an accession of height, as with a stately assumption of dignity, that would not have shamed La Dame Chatalaine of a melo-drama, I walked through the long train of retainers, dispensing nods and smiles around; and ascended the flight of marble steps that led to the principal suit of state rooms.

Here new delight awaited me. Apartments of vast proportions, furnished in a style of unrivalled magnificence, the walls glowing with the most admirable productions of the Italian school, met my view. I seemed to be some heroine of romance, long banished, but at length restored to her hereditary rights; and, as my glad eyes gleamed around, I was ready to exclaim, "And all this is mine—really mine!"

Yet, even at that moment, when infla-

ted by pride and vanity, I gloried in my possessions, memory recurred to *him* whom I once hoped would have shared with me the possession of this splendid castle; and I would have almost resigned it to have had my hand placed in his, and to have had a right to call him mine. Such were the thoughts that flashed across my mind, as I slowly paced through the *enfilade* of apartments, until I came to one of less vast proportions and of more modern decoration. There hung the portraits of my father and mother; and as my eyes fell on his mild and benevolent face, which seemed to welcome me to my ancestral home, a flood of gushing tears relieved the oppression that impeded my breathing. This pensive and dear countenance reminded me, for the first time since I entered the castle, of Lady Walsingham. I blushed crimson at the recollection of this ungracious and egotistical proof of my negligence, and, turning, I found her pale and melancholy; her eyes, too, fixed on the portrait of him who would have welcomed her more kindly than did the daughter who owed so much to his widow. I pressed Lady Walsingham to my heart in silence; and she as mutually dried her tears and returned my embrace.

"I have not yet bidden you welcome to *our* home, dear mother," said I; "may it ever prove as happy a one as *he* would have rendered it;" and I looked on his portrait.

"When you have selected a Lord for this castle, dear Arabella," replied she, "I shall seek another home: until then, your home shall be mine.

A suite of rooms had been, by my instructions, prepared for Lady Walsingham, filled with every object that I thought likely to conduce to her comfort. Nothing that taste or elegance could suggest was left undone by the upholsterer that had taken my orders; nor was he less attentive to those which related to my own apartments. All the classical decorations that I had ever admired in Italy or praised in France, joined to the exquisite neatness and comfort peculiar to England, were here united; and, as I examined the details and enjoyed the *ensemble*, I was not a little elated.

I stood before a vast mirror, half draped by the pale blue silk hangings with rich silver fringes that lined the walls of my dressing-room; and, as I contemplated my own image, vanity whispered, that even without the immense wealth and high nobility which I possessed, that form and face might well aspire to captivate. As I gazed on my mirror, I almost questioned the possibility of any man whose heart was not already occupied, resisting my powers of attraction; until memory reminded me that *he* whom alone I wished to fix had thrown off my chains the moment they pressed too heavily on him; and this reflection checked the over-weening self-complacency in which I was indulging.

I spent six months at Walsingham Castle; receiving from and giving a succession of *fêtes* to the whole neghborhood. I found myself an object of universal attraction, and as I make no doubt, of envy; though the demonstrations of it were so skilfully concealed that I was unconscious of the existence of the sentiment. The young ladies all copied my dress, the most indisputable proof of female admiration; and the elderly ones, more especially those who had unmarried sons or nephews, plied me with all the delicate attentions and adroit flatteries with which match-making dames assail wealthy heiresses. Never, however, for a moment did I now doubt that my own personal claims to admiration were not the cause of the homage I received.

My vanity increased with the food continually administered to its craving appetite; and, in proportion to this increase, was my astonishment that Lord Clydesdale had the self control to free himself from my chains. Yet the knowledge that he had done so, though it wounded my *amour propre* and still rankled at my heart, impressed me with a high opinion of his strength of mind, rather than with any suspicion of my own weakness.

How I longed to meet him again, and once more to subjugate his heart; for it seemed a reproach to my powers of captivation, that he *could* fly from me. Every object that pleased, every point of view that charmed me, were thought of with a reference to *how he* would approve them. I associated his beloved image with every scene around me; and almost cheated myself into believing that we might yet be united.

It was this delusive hope that caused me to rejoice when the time came for leaving Walsingham Castle; believing that in the metropolis my encounter with Lord Clydesdale was inevitable.

With a heart beating with joyful anticipations, I again found myself in London; and those anticipations seemed on the eve of being realised when I read the announce-

ment of Lord Clydesdale's arrival in town. When I drove through the streets, I fancied every tall distinguished looking man must be him. I looked for him in vain at the opera; and never accepted an invitation without expecting to meet him. Still, day after day passed away, and I saw him not!

"Where could he be?" was a question I asked myself every night, as fatigued and dispirited I sought my couch; but the question was an enigma beyond my power of solving.

Well has it been said, that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" mine was sick. But as my hope of meeting Lord Clydesdale faded away, my desire to encounter him became more ungovernable. It had now grown to be the object of my daily thoughts—my nightly dreams. A meeting must, as I fancied, inevitably lead to a reconciliation, and a renewal of our engagement. One glance would explain all; and no false pride on my part should prevent a perfect *eclaircissement*. Yes, I would avow my faults, and atone for them; and all would yet be well could we but meet.

An invitation to dine at the Duchess of Mellincourt's had been accepted by Lady Walsingham and me. As the day approached, I wished to find an excuse for declining it, for my spirits were depressed by the continual disappointment of not seeing him, whom I alone wished to behold.—Two days previous to the dinner, I met the Duchess of Mellincourt at Lady Fotheringay's; when, alluding to the dinner engagement, she mentioned that Lord Clydesdale was to meet us at her house. I found it difficult to repress the emotion this news excited; I felt inclined to embrace her in the joy that filled my heart; and I went home to indulge once more in dreams of happiness, and to study a toilette that should set off my person to the utmost advantage.

Never had I bestowed so much attention on this, to most women, momentous subject. Long did I waver between a robe of pale rose or cerulean blue; but at length I decided that simple, but always elegant, white, should be the toilette, with delicate pink and silver bows on the robe and in my hair, and pearls for my neck and arms. I thought the time would never arrive, so slowly did it seem to creep: I went to dress full two hours before my usual period; repeatedly changed the arrangement of my hair, and indefatigably consulted my mirror, to be assured that all was right.

We were among the first guests that arrived at the Duchess's. I almost feared to raise my eyes lest they should too suddenly encounter him whom they languished to behold. Guest after guest arrived, and, as the groom of the chambers announced each aristocratic name, I listened with painful eagerness to hear his pronounced.

When at length the maitre d'hotel's notice *que le diner est servi* summoned us to table, and that I saw the guests seated, I looked anxiously to observe whether there was a vacant place; and experienced a bitter sense of disappointment at finding every seat occupied. My joyful anticipation and *recherché* toilette were then all in vain; he who occasioned the one, and to please whom, the other was studied and adopted, came not. I could have wept over this cruel disappointment, but pride came to my aid; and while my heart was tortured I forced a smile to my lips, and compelled myself to answer the common-place questions addressed to me by the persons around me.

Talk of Spartan stoicism, what is it compared to that which a proud woman is obliged to assume when in the midst of society she finds herself "a cynosure for curious eyes," with the painful consciousness, that were one tear of those, that are struggling to gush forth, suffered to be visible, she should become the object, not of general interest and sympathy, but of idle or malevolent curiosity, and occasion countless false and injurious rumors. Of how many pangs does this knowledge quell every external symptom, how many tears are suppressed and sighs stifled, until in the privacy of her own chamber, unseen by mortal eye, a free vent can be given to them. And yet people call women weak and destitute of self-control!

When dinner was nearly over Lady Halifax, who sat opposite to me, observed to one of the party, that she expected to have met Lord Clydesdale.

"I saw him yesterday, continued she, "and he mentioned that he was to dine here to-day. I told him that he would meet Lady Walsingham and Lady Arabella, who I knew were friends of his, for Lady Walsingham had told me they knew him in Italy. But I must not make either of you ladies blush by repeating the very high eulogiums he bestowed upon both, and eulogiums from Lord Clydes-

dale are not indiscriminately given, for he is the most fastidious person possible."

"I received an excuse from him this morning," replied the Duchess of Mellincourt, "stating that he was suffering under under a violent headache."

"I fancy he is grown a little hypochondriacal of late," said Lady Ardenfield; "for he sent similar excuses to Lady Mordaunt's and to Lord William Crofts, and I saw him the day after each dinner in apparently perfect health."

How I writhed while listening to this statement; I had dined at both the parties to which Lady Ardenfield referred; and it now became obvious to me, that he had absented himself from them, and also from the Duchess of Mellincourt's to avoid meeting me. Had I then become an object of such distaste to him that he could not bear to encounter me; or did his reluctance proceed from a dread of again exposing his heart to the power of my fascinations? Need I tell my own sex which supposition gained belief in my mind? Yes; I now became convinced that he still retained too tender a feeling towards me, to admit of his trusting himself in my presence; and this belief consoled me in some degree for the disappointment occasioned by his absence. But then came the reflection, that if thus carefully bent on avoiding me, how was I to meet him? and my hopes became faint, and my spirits again sank at the prospect of days passed in vain expectation, and nights in as vain regrets—I thought the evening interminable. The common-place observations exchanged in the drawing-room, the lackadaisical compliments by the men, and the simpering complacency with which they were received by the women, appeared to me to be more than usually insipid. I offended more than one of the satellites that hovered round me by my total inattention to their *petits soins;* and had I not been an heiress as well as a belle, might have risked losing my popularity. But heiresses have been from time immemorial privileged persons, and my abstraction and *brusquerie* were therefore pronounced to be *tres piquant*, and quite delightful when compared with the over anxious civilities of the portionless young ladies who abound in every society.

Day after day, and week after week rolled away, bringing with them the same dull round of engagements that the upper circles misname amusements; and yet I never caught even a passing glance of Lord Clydesdale—still his image occupied my thoughts by day, and my dreams by night. I longed to question those acquainted with him, whether he was still in London; but I feared to betray my emotion, even while making the demand, and consequently refrained from inquiry. His pertinacity in avoiding me, seemed only to have excited an increased desire on my part to behold him again; and the facility with which I accomplished every other object, rendered my defeat in this, the dearest of all, more difficult to be borne. I became daily more imperious, more capricious, and unamiable. Yet this inequality of temper and haughtiness of manner, deterred not a numerous train of suitors from endeavoring to propitiate me. The perfect indifference I manifested to all, inspired each individual with hopes of rendering himself agreeable by submission and perseverance: but angered by their want of spirit and tact I severely tested their powers of forbearance. It was however proof against all the trials to which I subjected it; until unqualified rejections left them no room for hope, and restored to me the peace which their importunities had ruffled.

Notwithstanding all my vanity, I shrewdly suspected that my fortune had a greater influence over these pretenders to my hand, than the personal attractions, relative to which they paid me such florid compliments. This suspicion offended my *amour propre;* and I avenged its humiliation by a contemptuous negligence of manner towards my suitors, that might, if it had been adopted by Penelope of old, have enabled her to have sooner rid herself of her more troublesome ones. But my Ulysses came not to relieve me from mine; so I was compelled to dismiss them in *propria persona.* When they discovered the impartiality I displayed towards them, they unanimously joined in decrying me. I was pronounced to be a proud capricious and heartless woman, who never had, or never could love any creature but self! and whose fortune, large as it was, would be insufficient to make amends for my ill temper. Lady Walsingham and I heard of their revengeful strictures from many sources. She wished that I could have behaved with more politeness to them; adding that it was always considered that the highest compliment a man could pay to a woman, was to demand her hand.

"Yes, my dear Lady Walsingham," have I answered, "provided he does not demand also the large fortune that apper-

tains to that hand. A portionless demoiselle has to consider it a compliment when a man solicits to become her husband, because she must know, that he can have no pecuniary motive. But those needy aspirants who seek to prop up their falling fortune by that of an heiress, deserve no ceremony from her, and no pity from others when they are foiled in their mercenary speculations."

How infinitely high did Lord Clydesdale rise in my estimation when I contrasted his conduct with theirs. Alas! every man who tried to render himself agreeable to me, lost even the claims he possessed to become so, when judged by a comparison with him who was my *beau-ideal* of perfection.

At length the season drew to a close, and it became necessary to determine where the autumn and winter should be passed. I should have proposed a return to France and Italy, but that some spell seemed still to attach me to the country that *he* inhabited. I therefore determined to remain in England; and to pass the ensuing months in a round of visits to the various houses to which we were invited.

About this period, I began to remark the frequent visits of Lord Westonville, a nobleman of an agreeable exterior and gentlemanly manners, but of reserved habits. He, among all the men who hovered round me, was the only one who did not appear to offer homage or make any effort to conciliate my favor. This seeming indifference, while it gave me a better opinion of him, as compared with my suitors, served also to excite a certain degree of interest or curiosity relative to him.

"What then," thought I, on observing the frequency of his calls, and "the lingering, coy delay" with which he continued to prolong their duration, "he too, like all the others, aspires to please the rich heiress. Poor man! he, too, will share their fate; and subject himself to the mortification of a refusal, as soon as he has declared himself in form."

And yet there was something so amiable about him, that *malgré* my woman's vanity, I wished to spare him the humiliation of a rejection, by preventing him from placing himself in the position of receiving one. I therefore increased the coldness of my manner towards him, to the utmost extent to which politeness permits its votaries to go.

Yet, strange to say, his visits continued to be as frequent as before; and still more strange, he appeared wholly regardless of my *hauteur*. He seemed perfectly consoled for my taciturnity, by the unaffected cheerfulness of Lady Walsingham's conversation; and I concluded, that discovering my distaste to his attentions, he had transferred a portion of them towards her, for the purpose of conciliating her influence in his favor. I smiled internally, at anticipating the disappointment that awaited him; and expected every day to hear my stepmother commence a covert plan of attack, by praising the knight, whose cause she seemed to encourage, if not espouse. Still she said nothing; and my curiosity became more piqued. Unable to repress it, I one day remarked to her, that Lord Westonville had now become the most constant and assiduous of our visiters.

"I hope his presence is not disagreeable to you, my dear Arabella," replied Lady Walsingham, looking somewhat embarrassed.

"Ho, ho," thought I, "now I shall hear what I have so long been expecting. It is evident she wishes that I should be favorably disposed towards him."

"Why, as to being disagreeable to me, *ma chere belle mere*," answered I, "as long as he chooses to confine his attentions to mere friendship, I can have no objection to his visits; but beyond that, I acknowledge that they would not be acceptable.

"I rather feared so," said Lady Walsingham; "and this fear has had great weight with me. Still I hoped, that when better acquainted with Lord Westonville, who is really an estimable man, you might have conquered your repugnance. Your feelings, of course, my dear Arabella, have the greatest weight with me."

"In a case like the present they are doubtless of the utmost importance," replied I.

"Am I then to conclude that such a union would be painful to you?" asked Lady Walsingham; "because, in that case, I would at once put an end to his hopes."

"Such a union is quite out of the question; and the sooner you tell him so the better."

"But, surely some delicacy is due to his feelings; his proposals have been so generous, so——"

"Really, my dear Lady Walsingham, I cannot discover the generosity. Ladies, with large fortunes of their own, can sel-

dom, if ever, experience any great generosity on the part of their suitors."

"I perceive that your dislike to Lord Westonville is insurmountable," said *ma belle mere*, "and therefore I shall not accept his hand."

"Not accept his hand!—good heavens, you astonish me—I had no idea—you have taken me quite by surprise," replied I, totally forgetful, at the moment, what a silly figure I must make by avowing the error into which my vanity had plunged me. "Then Lord Westonville's views are directed to *you?*"

"I have only lately been aware of his predilection," answered Lady Walsingham; "but I should never have permitted his attentions, had I imagined that your feelings were so repugnant to my accepting him. I never have been, never can be, unmindful of all that I owe to you and your excellent father," resumed she; "and ill would it become me to bestow my hand on one who, however irreproachable, had inspired you with a sentiment of dislike, that might interrupt the harmony that has ever subsisted between us, or prevent my acting as hitherto, as your chaperon, companion, and friend."

When I looked at the beautiful woman before me, I could hardly understand how I had been so blind to her great personal attractions, of which habit alone could have rendered me forgetful. My own overweening vanity had also helped towards this obliviousness; and, truth to say, the idea of her exciting admiration, or love, when I was present, seemed to me to be as wholly out of the question as if she were old and ugly, instead of being still young and beautiful.

I felt ashamed, to avow the mistake into which my egregious vanity had hurried me; and Lady Walsingham, who was occupied with her own thoughts, appeared not to have observed it. Making an effort to conceal my embarrassment, I embraced her, and murmured something about my repugnance being caused wholly by the dread of parting from her.

"I expected that you would have felt this regret, my dearest Arabella; indeed I should have been hurt if you had not. Yet, let me assure you that if my marriage was to separate me from you, before yours had more naturally led to this result, I should never have had courage to contemplate such a measure. But, with so many suitors, it is impossible that you should not select some one on whom to bestow your hand; and when that hour arrives, my continued residence beneath your roof would not be necessary; and, certainly, would not be agreeable to your husband."

"Talk not to me of an event that is now never likely to occur. You know the cruel disappointment my own folly has occasioned me; a disappointment, the effects of which have not yet ceased to be felt with bitterness. But no more of that—I shall never marry. Yet I must not, therefore, permit you to renounce a union that secures you a protector and companion for life. No! that would be too selfish."

"I had determined," resumed Lady Walsingham, "on informing Lord Westonville that I should, with his permission, take a year to consider his proposals; not, however, holding him bound to any engagement, though I should deem myself excluded from entertaining any other proposition of a similar nature during that period. If his attachment be as sincere as I am willing to believe, he will not object to so reasonable a plan; and within that period my *chaperonage* for you, dear Arabella, may be no longer necessary."

"I see by the smile on your lips, *ma belle mere*, that you are incredulous with regard to my determination of leading a life of single blessedness. But time will prove that this resolution is a firm one; and *en attendant*, I do not see why you should compel Lord Westonville to the probation of a year, satisfied as you already are that he is amiable, sensible, and suitable; in fact, to exhaust all the panegyrical *bles*, unexceptionable. If his lordship will condescend to pass a few months of every year at my *chateau*, and receive me as a guest at his, I may still enjoy all the advantages of your *chaperonage*, with the addition and acquisition of his lordship's protection to the *belle fille* of his wife. I promise to be as amiable a hostess as possible to him, and as little troublesome a guest as may be. Do pray, dear Lady Walsingham, adopt my plan; it is much more reasonable than yours; and I am sure Lord Westonville will thank me for the suggestion."

People are always willing to follow advice when it accords with their own wishes; Lady Walsingham's pointed towards the counsel I gave, and it required only a little perseverance on my part, and the display of Lord Westonville's impatience, to determine her to yield.

The truth was, that being still in the bloom of life, with a natural timidity of disposition which led her to seek protection and companionship, it was not to be

wondered at, that, finding a man of high station, prepossessing appearance, cultivated mind, and agreeable manners, who preferred her to any of the reigning belles of the day with whom he could not have failed to have found favor, she was disposed to accept his hand.

Time, that omnipotent effacer of *eternal* passions, had obliterated the youthful one of *ma belle mere;* or, if not wholly obliterated, had left only a pensive recollection of it, that could in no degree interfere with the duties or happiness of a wedded state. Her position, even in the lifetime of my dear father, had never been one of perfect ease; for, though treated by him with consideration and kindness, the absence of all warmer feelings towards her in his heart must have made her continually sensible that to his love for me alone she owed the station to which he had elevated her. This consciousness, operating on a very timid disposition, served to render her more like a governess than a mistress of the house. Indeed she never acted as such, exercising no authority, and confining herself to a scrupulous attention to my poor father's personal comforts and my improvement.

After his death, she sank into the timid and retiring companion, instead of assuming that influential dignity to which, as my father's widow, she was entitled. It was, consequently, but natural that she should listen with complacency to the offer now made to her, the acceptance of which would secure her a protector and a companion for life; and he who aspired to her hand being in every way so unexceptionable a *parti*, that few women would have rejected him, or have felt otherwise than flattered by his preference.

Though no one could be more sensible of Lady Walsingham's merits and attractions than myself, still so occupied had my mind lately been by the conviction of my own supremacy, that I never expected that any man could bestow aught more than the tribute of an evanescent admiration on her inferior charms, when he had an opportunity of contemplating mine; and, consequently, when I paused before the mirror, and complacently gazed on the image it reflected, I confess that some pity, as well as surprise, was mingled in the opinion I formed of Lord Westonville's taste, or rather, according to my notions, want of taste.

I began, in spite, however, of this egotistical delusion, again for the first time to believe that my charms were not so extremely irresistible as I had hitherto imagined them to be; and this belief awakened some salutary reflections in my mind. Would that I had encouraged them! they might have saved me from some follies and more regrets. But, like most vain people, I silenced the admonitions of reason, and continued to cherish an overweening self-admiration.

Fearing that I had revealed to my stepmother the weakness of having supposed that I was the object of Lord Westonville's preference, I anxiously watched to discover to what extent she had detected me. But such was the simplicity of mind and singleness of heart of this excellent woman, that I really believe the circumstance had quite escaped her; or, if it had not, her manner conveyed no symptom of her having observed it. A vain woman would not only have quickly discovered my mistake, but would have as quickly let me see that she had made the discovery, by resenting the implied slight to her attractions, and ridiculing the erroneous estimate of my own.

But Lady Walsingham was not a vain woman; and, consequently, had no incentive either to detect the vanity of others, or to reap a triumph for her own. How many of our sex, who would otherwise have been estimable, have had their noblest qualities sullied by this one, but engrossing passion, which, "like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest;" rendering them eager to quarrel with the vanity of every other human being, in order to avenge the jealousy and *exigeance* of their own. How often do we hear women exclaim, "I cannot support Lady So and So, or Mrs. So and So, she is so intolerably vain;" never recollecting that this anger furnishes the most irrefragable proof that they possess in no ordinary degree the very quality they condemn; for it is an indisputable fact, that only vain people wage war against the vanity of others.

But to quit this digression and return to my story. It was agreed that the nuptials of Lord Westonville with *ma belle mere* should be solemnised at Walsingham Castle in three months; and that the intervening period should be passed in a round of visits. When I beheld the regret with which Lord Westonville quitted his future bride the morning of our departure from London, a sentiment almost amounting to envy, took possession of my mind. *She* was cared for, *her* absence was lamented, and her presence desired; while I was, as it were, alone in the world, ne-

cessary to no one, and left to support as best I might, the humiliating consciousness of my isolated state.

Never until Lady Walsingham's engagement with Lord Westonville had I imagined myself as otherwise than an enviable person. My position, my beauty and fortune, and the crowd of admirers which these advantages drew around me, had induced me to believe that I was the magnet of general attraction; and had only to extend a gracious smile to any of my adorers in order to behold him at my feet. But now my feelings were changed. The homage and respectful tenderness I saw lavished on Lady Walsingham by her accepted suitor, a homage offered in as seemingly total obliviousness of my presence as if I were not in existence, wounded my *amour propre* so extremely, that I was almost disposed to look favorably upon some one of the individuals, whose addresses I had so superciliously rejected but a short time previously, in order to secure to myself a similar devotion.

Such is the strange inconsistency of human nature, verifying the truth of the lines of our inspired bard—

"O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another's eyes."

The first visit we paid, was to the seat of the Marquis of Doncaster, in the eyes of whose fastidious Marchioness I had been so fortunate as to find favor; a distinction rarely accorded even to the most meritorious, and consequently sought with the greater avidity by those who valued it as many other worthless objects are valued, for its rarity.

The marquis was a dull, pompous, but not an ill tempered man. Naturally disposed to entertain a very high opinion of himself and his possessions, this feeling had been encouraged by the partner he had selected to share them; until he had arrived at that happy, though not unfrequent state of mind, in which people are so wholly engrossed by self as to become totally oblivious of others, except in relation to themselves. The Marchioness of Doncaster never for a moment forgot that she was of ancient descent, possessed immense wealth, and arrogated great importance; neither was she disposed to permit any one else to forget these distinctions. The slightest symptom of a want of recollection on these points produced an increase of *hauteur* on her part, and not unseldom, a sententious diatribe on the respectful deference which she considered to be her due.

Such is the weakness or meanness of the generality of people, that she found no lack of persons willing to propitiate her favor by a system of subserviency, that served to render her still more dictatorial; falsely attributing to her own acknowledged superiority, that which was but the proof of the unworthiness of her flatterers. She and her lord lived in a state of complete illusion, and this illusion constituted their happiness. They continually quoted each other's opinions as if they considered them worthy of forming a code to regulate the conduct of their acquaintance; but never were they kind enough to defer, or refer to the sentiments of any other person. If by chance some individual not versed in the peculiarities of the noble host and hostess ventured to state the *on dits* of some other magnet of the land, *they* instantly drew up to the utmost extent of their stateliness and silenced the speaker by saying, "Lord Doncaster and I am of a totally different opinion," or "the Marchioness and I think otherwise."

These sentences were considered to be conclusive; and, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, to admit of no appeal. I was not a person likely to propitiate the marchioness by any undue deference to her opinions, as I had long indulged in nearly as erroneous a belief in the infallibility of my own; but the antiquity of my family, or as she was pleased to term it, my illustrious descent, aided perhaps by my large possessions, and an occasional and unamiable display of *fierté* in my manner, had won her regard.

To Lady Walsingham she was condescendingly polite; but the condescension was so ostentatiously manifested, as not unfrequently to render the politeness more disagreeable and offensive than the most studied negligence would have been.

The house bore undeniable demonstrations of the character of the owners—magnificence had banished comfort; and the very chairs seemed to have been designed with a reference to the peculiarities of the marquis and the marchioness; the backs being so unusually perpendicular, that the slightest approach to a reclining posture was rendered impracticable. The sofas were so far removed from the formal circle in which the chairs were placed that they were useless; and these last were so cumbrous, that to move one of them out of its accustomed station was an Herculean task. The dimensions of the furniture were of Brobdignagian proportions, totally defying any effort of ordinary strength to displace

them; and I have seen the marchioness compelled to require the assistance of two of her footmen to draw the ponderous fire screen to protect her visage from the effects of fire.

The bed and dressing rooms appropriated to visiters, though containing all that wealth could place in them, bid defiance to comfort, even still more obviously than the saloons. No bergere or sofa on castors to admit of their being wheeled near the fire, were to be found in them. Heavy carved and gilded ones were placed formally against the walls of the vast apartments, from which it would have required the strength of half-a-dozen laqueys to have removed them. The dressing table, with its accessories in massive silver, stood in the centre; and at such a distance from the windows as to preclude a clear view in the mirror of the countenance of the person who used it. This circumstance, perhaps, might account for the undue and unequal distribution of rouge that was wont to appear on the cheeks of the noble hostess; one of which was generally much more florid than the other. Probably this circumstance too might be cited in explanation of the occasional elevation of one of her eyebrows; the black wax that imparted to them their raven hue, being not unfrequently placed *above*, instead of *on*, the brow.

The first day of our arrival, the only guests assembled to meet us were the rector of the parish, and the doctor, with their respective wives. The appearance of both these worthies might have served to convince even the most incredulous person, of the superior advantages enjoyed by him to whom was delegated the care of souls, over him to whom was intrusted the cure of bodies. The reverend doctor was a man of extraordinary obesity and rubicund countenance; while the medical doctor looked as if he had swallowed half the physic he had prescribed for others, so thin was his frame, and so pallid his face. Their helpmates resembled their liege lords in a remarkable degree, Mrs. Warburton being almost as fat as the reverend doctor, while Mrs. Hollingford looked in a state of advanced atrophy.

Never had I witnessed such extreme obsequiousness as that exhibited by these four individuals to the Marquis and Marchioness of Doncaster. They assented to every observation uttered by either, generally adding, "your ladyship is always right," or "your lordship is perfectly correct." They did ample justice to the dinner which was more remarkable for its copiousness, than for the talents of the cook. The reverend doctor united the fastidiousness of an epicure in his entreaties for the most delicate morsels, with the gluttony of the gourmand in the rapidity with which he caused their disappearance; while the M.D. positively devoured like a famished man, determined to make the best use of his time.

"What is the news, Dr. Hollingford?" demanded Lord Doncaster, when the removal of the soup and fish allowed a few brief minutes of repose to that gentleman.

"No news, my Lord Marquis, the country never was so dull; scarcely a patient amongst the gentry. But among the poor, nothing but coughs and sore throats; the apothecary of the county dispensary declares he never furnished so much medicine before; and for my part, I do nothing but ride all over the parish, and write prescriptions."

"How very strange," said Lady Doncaster, "that while the upper classes are so well, the lower ones should be so unhealthy, notwithstanding they live in the same climate. Such a circumstance justifies my hypothesis, that the upper class are as superior in physical as they are in mental powers to the lower orders."

"That's just what I say, your ladyship," observed Mrs. Hollingford; "the wealthy are rarely ill. Now there's Mr. Goldsworthy, the retired brewer, who is as rich as a Jew, he has now been two whole years in the parish, and never once sent for the doctor. Why it's a perfect shame! How does he think doctors are to live?"

A look of unutterable contempt from Lady Doncaster, was all the notice taken of this remark; but the reverend divine continued the subject, saying, "I don't quite know what to make of this same Mr. Goldsworthy. He has never been once to my church since he came here, which I hold to be very indecorous, and disrespectful to me."

"The two sins of omission you have both related, explains the cause of Mr. Goldsworthy's uninterrupted health," replied the Marquis of Doncaster, with a species of laugh vulgarly denominated a chuckle. "By not going into your damp church, reverend sir, he escapes cold; and by not sending for the doctor, he avoids the necessity of taking physic. Eh, gentlemen, eh, eh, what do you say to that?"

"Your lordship is so very droll;" uttered one, and, "your lordship is pleased to banter," said the other.

At this moment, a portion of a glass of wine which Dr. Warburton was gulping down rather too rapidly, went wrong, and produced all the symptoms of strangulation. His rubicund face became of a dark purple hue, his eyes appeared starting from their orbits, and a convulsive noise was heard to issue from his throat. Doctor Hollingford started from his seat, drew a case of lancets from his pocket, and prepared to remove Dr. Warburton's coat for the purpose of trying the effects of phlebotomy; but Mrs. Warburton rushed to the defence of her husband, and placing herself between him and the doctor, exclaimed that he should not be bled. The *maitre d'hotel*, more judicious than the doctor or the suffering man's angry wife, untied his cravat; and Mrs. Warburton, having now succeeded in sending back the mortified and disappointed Dr. Hollingford to his seat, applied her finger and thumb to the snuff box which she took from her husband's pocket, and conveyed a large pinch of the pungent powder into his nostrils.

"Have a care, madam, what you do," said the angry and baffled doctor; "the consequences may be attended with great danger; the already overcharged vessels of the head may not be capable of resisting the undue excitement of sternutation, at such a moment."

This reasonable remonstrance produced no other effect on the enlightened Mrs. Warburton, than to induce her to administer a still larger pinch of snuff to the nostrils of her convulsed husband, who now, in addition to the hiccup, began sneezing repeatedly and violently, sending forth at each effort, most unseemly aspersions over the dishes. Lady Doncaster ordered the *entrées* within reach of the undesirable irrigation to be forthwith removed; and looked the very incarnation of dismay and anger at this untimely interruption of the repast. Her lord seemed more disposed to smile at than sympathise with Dr. Warburton's painful situation; who still continued to sneeze, though he, with one hand manfully resisted his wife's efforts to force on him another pinch of snuff.

Doctor Hollingford kept his eyes fixed on the reverend divine with a glance of such intense curiosity, that I was uncharitable enough to think, that he would not have been sorry, had his prediction of the danger to which Mrs. Warburton's treatment exposed the life of her husband, been verified, and thus established a proof of his prescience and skill. But he was doomed to be disappointed; for, after a quarter of an hour's suffering, Dr. Warburton was restored to his usual state of composure. But not so his wife; who, holding the snuff box open, while the doctor struggled against her administering another pinch, his hand came in contact with the box, and sent its contents into her eyes, as she in a recumbent posture approached him. She bore not this accident patiently, but uttered piercing cries, closing her eyes tenaciously, as if to retain all the pungent powder that they had received. Dr. Hollingford again approached her to offer his advice, and again was repulsed, with less of urbanity than decorum warranted.

"Yes, yes, you want to make a job of me," exclaimed the fat lady, "I know you do, but you shall have no fee from me, I can tell you."

"For the matter of that, ma'am," replied Mrs. Hollingford, "I'd have you to know that my husband, Dr. Hollingford, is not a man to think of fees, when a fellow-creature is in peril, as all the poor in the parish can vouch. But *some* people are so very suspicious and stingy, that it is difficult for other people to escape their censures."

"If by some people, you mean me, ma'am," answered Mrs. Warburton, still wiping her eyes, and horribly distorting her countenance, "I can assure you that———"

"Ladies, I beg," said Lady Doncaster, "that you will remember that Lady Walsingham, Lady Arabella Walsingham, Lord Doncaster, and myself can feel very little interest in your local differences, and therefore I request that you will restrain the expression of them for a more fitting occasion."

This was said with the marchioness' most stern and dignified air, and produced the desired effect; for Mrs. Warburton "hoped her ladyship would have the goodness to excuse her warmth;" and Mrs. Hollingford humbly "begged her ladyship's pardon."

Peace being restored, though it was evident that the angry feelings of the ladies of the D.D. and M.D., were by no means appeased, notwithstanding that a fear of offending the noble host and hostess, induced them to subdue every external symptom of irritation, Lady Doncaster announced that, by letters received that morning from London, she was informed, that their friend Lord Westonville was shortly to lead to the hymeneal altar, the Lady Theodosia Fitz Hamilton.

"A very suitable and proper marriage," replied Lord Doncaster, "unobjectionable in every point of view."

"Yes," said the marchioness, "Lady Theodosia is a most dignified and high-bred young woman; one who has a proper consciousness of her own elevated position, and who will never permit others to forget it."

"Lady Doncaster is in this instance, as in all others, perfectly correct," observed the marquis; "Lady Theodosia is precisely the model I should select to represent the female aristocracy of England. No weak condescension about her; no undignified desire to please."

"I am highly gratified by the match," resumed Lady Doncaster, oracularly; "for, as my Lord observes, Lady Theodosia is indeed a model for all women, and a union with her must insure the happiness of Lord Westonville."

"I am strongly disposed to disbelieve the report," said I, somewhat maliciously.

"And pray, why, Lady Arabella?" demanded Lady Doncaster, with her most stately air.

Lady Walsingham cast an imploring glance at me; but I could not resist adding, "simply, because I happen to know, that Lord Westonville has proposed to, and been accepted by, another, and I think more eligible person."

"But, you will excuse me, Lady Arabella, if I say, that ladies are sometimes prone to insinuate that gentlemen have proposed to them, who never entertained any such intention."

"In the present instance, there can be no mistake," replied I; "for Lord Westonville himself talked to me of his approaching nuptials with the lady to whom I referred."

"You astonish me," answered the marchioness, with an expression that more plainly expressed, "you enrage me."

"Yes, you really surprise me, as Lady Doncaster justly observed," said her sapient lord; "and had you not mentioned that you heard Lord Westonville himself confirm his intention of wedding another lady, I should hardly have permitted myself to credit the assertion; for the Dowager Duchess of Willmingham, who wrote the other statement to Lady Doncaster, is extremely accurate in the intelligence she conveys."

"I hope the lady in question is of ancient descent, for I cannot bear the thought of a *mesalliance*; and I trust she possesses the same dignified manners that characterise Lady Theodosia?"

Poor Lady Walsingham blushed to her very temples; but luckily no one observed this betrayal of her keen sense of the illiberal remark of her haughty hostess.

"The lady is of high rank," answered I, "and her manners I have always considered very distinguished and agreeable. To be sure, she does condescend to please; and never fails to succeed."

"Then," retorted the hostess, angrily, "she must be, in my opinion, deficient in the dignity that ought to appertain to a high-born woman. I never could tolerate the idea of a lady of rank so far forgetting what is due to herself and sex, as to seek to obtain, by propitiation, the homage and the suffrage which her station ought to command."

"Lady Doncaster speaks my sentiments on this point," said her lord, looking pompously and half angrily; "I must say, I never could tolerate the modern system which, if it degenerates not into a vulgar familiarity, is at least too much calculated to make people forget the line of demarcation which should ever subsist between a lady of ancient and noble lineage, and the mere pretenders to fashion; who, by the influence of wealth, force themselves into a society they are so little fitted to adorn."

"Lord Doncaster's notions on this subject are well worth attention and adoption," observed his lady wife, smiling complacently on him.

"Your ladyship and his lordship's notions on *all* subjects must ever be worth attending to," remarked the reverend doctor; "and happy are those who have an opportunity of being edified by them."

"Happy indeed," ejaculated Dr. Hollingford, in a tone partaking of a groan and a thanksgiving. "Why, no later than yesterday, Sir Gregory Tomkinson observed to me, that affairs would never go right until the Marquis of Doncaster was at their head."

"What signifies the opinion of a city knight?" retorted Dr. Warburton, "when Sir John Haverstoke, one of the most ancient baronets in England, ay, and a man possessing a clear estate of twelve thousand pounds a year, told *me* last Sunday, after church, (for he makes it a point never to omit attending divine worship,) that his lordship was a nobleman on whom all eyes were turned to be prime minister."

"Though the opinions of Sir John Haverstoke are certainly worth attending to, as representing those of the landed interest in the county, still those of Sir Gregory Tomkinson are not to be despised; for I have observed on more occasions than one, that he is a sensible and discriminating man."

This speech was uttered by the noble host with an affectation of humility and condescension that was highly amusing; and the approval of Sir Gregory from so high a quarter, carried balm to the wound inflicted by Dr. Warburton on the feelings of the worthy M.D.

"But for my part," resumed Lord Doncaster, "nothing would be more disagreeable to me than finding myself compelled to accept office. Indeed, nothing short of a royal command would induce me to do so; for, as Lady Doncaster very properly observed, when we talked the matter over, a person of my high rank and fortune can gain no accession of dignity by holding office; and the fatigue and trouble present an insuperable objection, as I stated in a certain influential—indeed I may say, illustrious quarter, when certain propositions were more than hinted at."

"Yes," said the marchioness, "my lord and I are placed in a position that precludes us from experiencing the temptations of ambition; and I never could submit to be, as prime minister's wife, compelled to receive a heterogeneous mass of people, to whom it would be necessary to enact the gracious."

The D.D., M.D., and their respective wives, looked with increased awe and reverence at the noble host and hostess; but fortunately, a signal from the latter led us to the drawing-room, and released us from the prosy flatteries of the toad-eating doctors, and the self-complacent replies of the gratified host.

We found our *séjour* at Doncaster Castle so irksome, that we abridged it, and proceeded towards home, judging by this specimen of country houses that our own was preferable to any we might encounter.

The eccentricities of our late host and hostess furnished abundant subject for my ill-natured comments during the first day of our route homewards; notwithstanding that Lady Walsingham, with the kindness that always characterised her, interposed the shield of her good nature between their defects and the severity of my animadversions. She censured the too prevalent habit in guests of violating the rights of hospitality, by criticising those infirmities which the confidence of friendship has alone developed, and which in a less intimate intercourse would probably have never been revealed.

"But who, my dear Lady Walsingham would offer this hospitality, did they not intend to enliven the *tædium vitæ*, by detecting the follies of their guests: the recapitulation of which, after their departure serves as an agreeable mode of varying the monotony of a country-house existence. The guests are generally aware of this dissecting process, and repay it in kind. Now I dare be sworn, that at this moment Lord and Lady Doncaster are pitying 'that poor dear mild Lady Walsingham, (who, though, to be sure, a *leetle* dull, is nevertheless a very inoffensive good sort of a person) at being compelled to live with that flippant imperious Lady Arabella, who seems to think, forsooth, that because she comes of an ancient lineage, and is an heiress, she is superior to the rest of the world."

"How can you, Arabella, be so suspicious and satirical?"

"And how can you, *ma chere belle mere*, be so very unsuspicious and good natured?"

This was the mode in which Lady Walsingham's reproofs were made and received. She was, in truth, the very soul of womanly charity, ever ready to put the most favorable construction on the actions of others, and to require none for her own, for they were pure and blameless as her soul. Yet, strange to say, it was perhaps this unusual gentleness and benevolence in her, that urged me to a not unfrequent practice of the contrary qualities. Her extraordinary forbearance irritated me at times: and led me to my expressing opinions that were not always founded in justice. She judged the world by the fair model of human nature best known to herself, while I drew my conclusions from the unfavorable specimen of it offered in my own character. We were both wrong but *her* error was the more amiable.

On arriving at the Marquis of Granby Inn, at Northallerton, where we were to remain for the night, we after a light repast sought our separate chambers. After having dismissed my attendant, I recollected that I had forgotten a book in the sitting-room, to which I attached a peculiar value, it having been the gift of Lord Clydesdale. Fearful of its getting into other hands, I seized a light, and was hurrying in search

it, when my foot was caught in a rent of of the stair carpet, and I was falling to the ground, but was saved by being caught in the arms of a person who was ascending.

Flurried and rendered nervous by this accident, I trembled so violently that the person who had arrested my fall still supported me; fearful lest I should again be exposed to a similar danger. I turned to thank him, when—Oh! merciful Heaven! —I recognised in the stranger him who for months and years had occupied every thought, filled every dream, and was allied to every hope of my doting heart! A passionate burst of tears relieved me; and "Do I again see you, Clydesdale? Dear —always *dear* Clydesdale!" broke from my lips, as clinging to him, and subdued by the surprise and joy of seeing him, I wept on his bosom. "Cruel Clydesdale! how could you fly from me? Ah! if you knew the days of care, the nights without sleep, that I have passed since you left me!"——And here my tears and sobs precluded me from finishing the sentence.

All this scene passed on the public staircase of a crowded inn; and that there were no witnesses of it seems nothing short of a miracle. He trembled nearly as much as I did, and bore me into the sitting room to which I had been proceeding when we met, and the door of which stood open. When he had placed me on a chair, I fixed my eyes fondly on his face—that face which memory had so often and tenderly recalled to my mind. Its paleness and solemnity so shocked and alarmed me, that, forgetful of the pride and delicacy of my sex, and awake only to the dread of again losing him, I passionately poured forth the confession of my unchanged, my unchangeable love; the truth of which the energy of my manner and the tears that bathed my cheeks too well attested. He made many efforts to interrupt me while I spoke, but I would not be checked. The feelings so long pent up in my heart now burst forth, and could not be repressed. What, then, was my agony at discovering that his countenance became still more pale and solemn as I proceeded.

"Is it, can it be, Clydesdale," I exclaimed in deep humiliation, "that you no longer love me?"

"The position in which this fatal *rencontre* places us," replied he, and he trembled while he spoke, "compels me to avow that, welcome as would once have been the confession you have made me, dear Lady Arabella, it now comes too late; for I,—I am the husband of another."

Never shall I forget the overpowering agony of that moment! how I wished it was the last of my existence! He, even he, the traitor, seemed to feel for the misery he had inflicted, but the expression of pity on his countenance nearly maddened me.

"Leave me! leave me, for ever;" I passionately exclaimed. "You shall be obeyed," answered he with sadness. "But do not let us part in unkindness. You have not, believe me, a truer friend."

"Leave me!" I again exclaimed, "unless you would see me driven to some act of insanity."

He slowly left the room, and I—stole to my chamber, to which my trembling limbs could scarcely bear me, like a degraded and guilty creature, whose heart was torn between the conflicting emotions of love and shame. When I reflected that I had poured into the ear of the husband of another, the mad, the immodest avowal of a passion, which I could no longer entertain, or he reciprocate, without guilt and infamy, the deepest sense of humiliation took possession of my mind. I writhed in mental torture under this degrading consciousness of my own folly; tears of agony flowed down my burning cheeks; and I dreaded to meet the light of day, deserted and despised, as I now felt myself to be.

Jealousy also added its sharp pangs to those inflicted by disappointed love and shame. He, whom alone, I ever really, truly loved, was now lavishing on another those marks of affection, which I once believed would be mine, and mine only. Nay, was perhaps, at that moment repeating to her my indelicate, my inexcusable conduct.

When had he married, and how had it occurred, that the intelligence of his nuptials had not reached my ears? It was strange; it was unaccountable!!

Never shall I forget the anguish I endured that night. Sleep deigned not to visit my pillow for even a few brief moments; and I counted the weary hours as the clock told them, wishing that each might be the last of an existence now rendered hateful to me.

I arose when day had dawned, and endeavored, by the application of rose water, to remove from my eyes the redness occasioned by weeping. My temples throbbed with pain, and my limbs ached; yet, though severely suffering from indisposition, I could still think of guarding appearances; and before my maid had en-

tered my chamber, I had succeeded in ameliorating, if not in effacing the symptoms of my grief, sufficiently to make the old excuse of "a severe headache" explain the cause of my altered looks.

"There has been a new married couple in the house, last night, my lady," said my *femme de chambre*, with that craving desire to communicate intelligence peculiar to her class. "The Marquis of Clydesdale and his bride. They were married yesterday morning, your ladyship; and are on their road to one of his lordship's fine country seats. The bride is a great beauty, and is a daughter to the Duke of Biggleswade. I knew the lady's maid in my last place, and she told me all about it after her ladyship had gone to bed."

I dismissed Mrs. Tomlinson for a cup of strong coffee, anxious to abridge her communications, every word of which inflicted a fresh pang; and trembling lest she should prate of the *love* of the happy couple, which I had not yet acquired sufficient fortitude to hear of, without the risk of betraying emotions that might give rise to suspicions of the state of my heart.

How strange, and oh! how much to be regretted, was the coincidence of my finding myself in the same house with Lord Clydesdale, and on such an occasion! Yet this meeting was occasioned wholly by my own obstinacy in resisting the entreaties of my late host and hostess to prolong my stay with them for another day. Had I yielded, how much of humiliation had I been spared! But it was fated that through life my wilfulness was to draw down its own punishment.

How was I to act towards Lady Walsingham? Should I confess my interview with my *ci devant* lover, and the mortifying position in which I had placed myself, trusting to her affectionate sympathy for an alleviation of the misery I was enduring? I longed to give a free course to the pent tears, that were every moment struggling to start forth; and to weep on that gentle bosom which had from early youth so often supported my aching head, when pain or sorrow had assailed me.

But pride, ungovernable pride, forbade this indulgence; and dictated a line of conduct which added to my chargrin, by rendering deception and hypocrisy absolutely necessary. Oh! the martyrdom of smiling when tears are ready to gush forth; of talking on different subjects when all thoughts and feelings are concentrated on a prohibited one; or of speaking on that *one* with an assumed carelessness, to support the appearance of which, requires a self-control almost beyond the reach of woman.

Yet this was the conduct I adopted; for not even to Lady Walsingham, dearly as I knew she loved me, and implicitly as I was aware that I might confide in her, could my pride permit me to relate the truth; however soothing might be the tender sympathy it could not fail to awaken. No! I would affect a perfect indifference on the subject of Lord Clydesdale's marriage; and whatever the effort might cost me, no human being should discover the agony I was enduring. It is thus that our own defects, and there is not a more pernicious one in its consequences than pride, add new stings to the misfortunes that assail us. Disappointment loses half its bitterness when it is confided to some affectionate friend who listens with sympathy, and who shares if she cannot alleviate the sting. Yet of this consolation did I deprive myself, urged by that indomitable pride that had so often led me astray; and which was the severest avenger of the follies it had occasioned, by rendering me still more deeply conscious of their humiliating effects.

When I met Lady Walsingham at breakfast, no word of hers indicated her knowledge that Lord and Lady Clydesdale had sojourned beneath the same roof with us the night before; that they were in fact still beneath it. I had risen much earlier than my accustomed hour, anxious to quit the inn before those I so much wished to avoid had left their chamber. But my evil destiny still pursued me; for, while Lady Walsingham and I stood at the window impatiently waiting to hear our travelling carriage announced, that of Lord Clydesdale drove up to the door to receive its owners. To withdraw from the window would be to expose my secret feelings to Lady Walsingham; and therefore I stood, with the semblance of calmness, though my very heart throbbed with intense pain. She made some excuse for absenting herself from the room, and I thanked her for this delicate attention; though I feared it indicated a knowledge of my weakness that I had hoped she had not acquired. I was, consequently, left alone, and determined, whatever pain the effort might cost me, to behold the wife of him, to whom *I* had hoped to have stood in that near and dear relation. I waited not long, for in a few minutes the bridegroom led forth his bride, and assisted her

to ascend the carriage. There was an affectionate solicitude apparent in the performance of even this trivial action, that indicated a more than ordinary tenderness, and therefore inflicted an acute pang on my heart. There was a time when I was the object of similar attentions from him; attentions performed with an earnestness of affection more flattering to her who received them, than all that mere gallantry ever suggested.

The person of Lady Clydesdale was tall and graceful, and her face, of which, when she was seated in the carriage I had a full view, was one of the most beautiful I had ever beheld. Its surpassing loveliness too well explained why mine was forgotten; and as I gazed on it for the few minutes that intervened ere the servants were ready to start, I fancied that I might have better borne his marriage had the object of his selection been less beautiful. Yet perhaps it was well for me that her loveliness had made such a forcible impression on my mind; for, from the moment I had beheld her, I never could think of him without associating her image with his. Hence, by slow degrees I learned to repress the painful recollection of my unhappy disclosure; but not until many a bitter thought and sleepless night had expiated my folly.

Lady Walsingham never recurred to the subject; and I, though anxious to display my affected indifference by conversing on it with *nonchalance*, had not resolution sufficient to name it. Her affectionate attentions to me seemed to increase daily, and strange to say, not unfrequently occasioned me more of pain than pleasure, as I fancied they originated in the pity excited by the contrast of our respective prospects.

On arriving at Walsingham Castle, the neighboring nobility and gentry again flocked to visit me. Among them was one, whom at my former *séjour* in the country I had not seen, though his name was frequently mentioned. Lord Wyndermere was then on the continent; and was represented to me as a man of great personal attractions and accomplishments, with a highly cultivated mind. His father had been so extravagant as to leave his estate heavily incumbered at his death; and his successor's income was represented as being totally inadequate to the support of his rank and station.

As a boy, Lord Wyndermere had been much beloved in the neighborhood, and was now always spoken of with respect and regard. He had only lately returned to Wyndermere Abbey, a fine old seat about twenty miles distant from mine, where he was residing with a very limited establishment; but his society was universally sought and appreciated in the circle in which I lived.

We soon met; and I found that report had not exaggerated his merits. A thoughtfulness of manner, amounting to pensiveness, distinguished him from the common herd of young men, whose frivolity and gaiety never appeared to greater disadvantage than when contrasted with his mild seriousness. This gravity, so unusual at his age, was generally attributed to the straitened circumstances in which he found himself placed; and it served to increase the interest he excited. His poverty, and the dignified equanimity with which it was borne, was a passport to my favor; which was the more readily yielded to him, from his making no effort to acquire it.

He was polite to all; but there was a reserve in his very politeness that precluded familiarity; and to me, he was less attentive—though always scrupulously well bred—than to any other of the ladies who formed our society. I am fully persuaded, that had Lord Wyndermere possessed affluence, he would have only created a common-place sentiment of good will in my mind: but his high birth and scanty means awakened a thousand of those romantic and commiserating thoughts and feelings peculiar to women, which generally terminate in the creation of a warm interest in their minds at least, if not in their hearts.

I often detected him gazing on me, and observed, that on such occasions, he seemed embarrassed, and avoided looking at me again for some time. Though I was ready to admit the superiority of Lord Wyndermere over most part of the men of my acquaintance, I nevertheless considered him immeasurably inferior to Lord Clydesdale; and the consciousness of this inferiority, which never forsook me, precluded me from entertaining any warmer sentiments towards him, than esteem and pity. Notwithstanding my indifference, after a month or two had elapsed, during which period we frequently met, I began to be piqued as well as surprised, at discovering that he was more assiduous to any or every woman of our circle than to myself. His attentions to them, however, never exceeded that polite gallantry so universally adopted by all gentlemen at that period; still, to me, he was more cold,

more ceremonious, and avoided, rather than sought occasions for conversing with me. Yet when I have been talking to others I have remarked, with a truly feminine vigilance, that he invariably ceased speaking, and listened with a deep interest. This inconsistency of behavior aroused a certain degree of curiosity in my mind; and that woman is in danger in whom this sentiment is awakened. Pity and curiosity are said to be exclusive attributes of the female character; the first I do believe to be a distinctive feature; but the second, and less amiable quality, appertains equally to both sexes. I will leave to casuists to determine which of the two sexes are the more entirely influenced by it, while I acknowledge that I was governed by both at this epoch; even though the wound inflicted on my peace by the late death-blow to its long cherished hopes, still bled and rankled.

Lord Westonville now came to claim his bride, and for the first time of my life, I found myself *de trop*, though in my own house. His brief separation from the object of his affection served to increase his passion for her. He had eyes only for her, was never happy when she was not present; and notwithstanding his good breeding, it was obvious, that the presence of a third person was by no means agreeable to him. He was anxious that the honey moon should be passed *tête-à-tête;* but how was this natural wish to be accomplished without leaving me unprotected? an indecorum not to be tolerated in the good old times of etiquette aud propriety to which I refer.

I quickly discovered, by various nameless trifles, all that was passing in the mind of my stepmother's future husband; and the discovery awakened serious reflections in my breast. If I thus felt the annoyance of being *de trop* in my own house, how much more unbearable would it become when I fonnd myself in his; and yet to dwell without a *chaperon* was impossible. The few female relatives who might have filled this onerous office towards me, were all too personally disagreeable to me, to admit of my submitting to their society.

What therefore was I to do, or where bestow my person for even a few weeks, while *ma belle mere* was enacting the part of bride? I was positively humiliated, as all these puerile annoyances presented themselves to my imagination: my dependent position galled my vanity, and led to some sober reflections on the advantages of a wedded life, which precluded the necessity of *chaperons*. Sincere and warm as was my attachment to Lady Walsingham, I could not at all tolerate the idea of forming a *tiers* in her future domestic circle, with the consciousness that my presence would be an irksome restraint on her lord. Then to find myself always a secondary object, a continual witness to the homages offered to another. No! it was not to be borne; and I almost "wished that heaven had made me such a man." Yet not exactly quite such a man; but in short some *convenable parti*, whose presence would relieve me from all necessity of *chaperons;* and whose devoted attentions would convince me, that I too might be worshipped in my own temple.

While making these reflections, shall I confess that the handsome, but serious, face of Lord Wyndermere more than once occurred to my mind? *He* would not have been an unsuitable husband; for though poor, he, it was quite evident, was no fortune hunter; and his family was as ancient and noble as my own. It would have been very desirable also, to prove to those in general, who might suspect my former attachment to Lord Cyldesdale, and to that individual himself in particular, that it never could have been of a serious character, by my so speedily following his example in marrying. But it was useless for *me* to think of this subject, as it was quite obvious Lord Wyndermere had never bestowed a thought upon it. Nevertheless I *did* think of it occasionally, and especially when the sighs and whispers of the doting Lord Westonville reminded me that my presence interrupted the impassioned eloquence of his conversation to his future bride.

One of the nearest of my neighbors was a very handsome widow, a Mrs. Temple Clarendon, remarkable for the fascination of her manners, and, the exemplary propriety of her conduct. Left a widow at twenty-two, with an enormous jointure, the whole of which was to be forfeited in case of her contracting a second marriage, she, now in the fourth year of her widowhood, appeared to have renounced all thoughts of matrimony, and was but lately returned from the continent, where she had spent three years. I quickly formed an intimacy with this lady: congenial tastes and habits cemented it into friendship, and I considered it as peculiarly fortunate, when, having confided to her my embarrassment with regard to accom-

panying *ma belle mere* on her honeymoon expedition, she obviated the difficulty by kindly and warmly soliciting me to take up my abode with her during the absence of the future Lady Westonville.

I yielded a ready assent—Lord Westonville looked as if he thought the plan an admirable one, though he feebly uttered something about regretting the loss of my society; and Lady Walsingham, though really loth to be separated from me, acceded to a project that seemed to afford me so much satisfaction.

The nuptials took place a few days after. The same number of white favors, and the same quantity of bride-cake, were distributed, as is customary on such occasions; the same splended *dejeuner* was partaken of, and the quantum of tears shed. When this established portion of the performance had been exhibited, the whole was orthodoxly concluded by a new and tasteful equipage, with postilions and outriders decked with wedding favors, whirling the bride and bridegroom from the door.

I could not see her, who had been my kind and attached companion for so many years, depart without deep regret. It brought back to me the recollection of the days of my youth, and of that fond father who was in the grave. But Mrs. Temple Clarendon, who was present, soon cheered me by her attentions; and, by the time we had reached her dwelling, my spirits were restored to their wonted tone.

The next day, we dined at a neighboring nobleman's and there we met Lord Wyndermere, and to my no slight annoyance, Sir Augustus Fauconberg, the friend of Lord Clydesdale; he whose disclosure of the motive of his friend's absence on the anniversary of the death of his first love, had led to our separation. He was associated in my mind with one of the most painful events of my life, an event which he, in a great measure caused; and, therefore, I disliked him. To this objection to meeting him again was added the fear that he might disclose my former engagement to Lord Clydesdale; every reference to which I detested ever since he had become the husband of another. I soon found that Mrs. Temple Clarendon was an old acquaintance of his; Lord Wyndermere also had met him on the Continent; and I felt any thing but gratified when I heard her engage both gentlemen to meet a party at her house the ensuing day.

During the evening I accompanied the Ladies Percival, the daughters of our host, into a conservatory that communicated with the suite of drawing-rooms, and into which the windows of several of them opened. While admiring some rare plants on the pyramdal stand, which completely concealed me from those in the drawing-room, I heard Sir Augustus Fauconberg observe to Lord Wyndermere, that I seemed to have quite surmounted my attachment for Lord Clydesdale. Curiosity riveted me to the spot; and, luckily, my companions were too far distant to hear what was passing.

"Is it possible that Lady Arabella Walsingham ever could have loved in vain?" exclaimed Lord Wyndermere.

"Why, not exactly that," replied Fauconberg, and I hated him from that moment, "Clydesdale was very much in love with her, and they were on the point of being married; that is, they were affianced, and all that sort of thing. But she took it into her imperious little head, (and I can assure you a devilish proud head it is,) that because he had once loved before, and still retained a mournful recollection of her he had loved, she, forsooth, was ill-used; and so, (can you believe such folly?) she wrote a haughty letter to poor Clydesdale, commanding him to see her no more. You have no idea how long and severely he suffered from this capricious conduct of hers; for he was really attached to her, and she too, I fancy, liked him extremely."

What were my feelings at hearing this!

"How any man that Lady Arabella had once honored with her preference could think of, much less bestow his hand on another, appears to me almost incredible; for she is a woman that once seen, can never be forgotten," said Lord Wyndermere.

"Hang me, if you are not a little smitten yourself," replied Fauconberg. "Why not endeavor to render the sentiment reciprocal? With her vast fortune, and your encumbered one, it would be the very wisest plan in the world."

I was all ear, and listened with intense anxiety to this discourse.

"It is precisely because she *has* a vast fortune, and I an encumbered one, that I must never think of her. I am too proud to become a suitor to the *heiress*, though I could worship the *woman*, and ——"

Here the ladies Percival approached; and, fearful that they might discover that I had been an eaves-dropper, I quietly joined them, and sauntered towards another part of the conservatory.

This overheard conversation made a deep impression on me. Now was the reserve of Lord Wyndermere explained, and explained in a manner most flattering to my vanity, and creditable to his feelings. What pride and delicacy did his sentiments evince! Handsome and agreeable as I had hitherto considered him, he was now invested with fresh attractions in my mind; and I felt elated at the conquest I had achieved. Yes, *his* indeed was a heart worth captivating; *he* could not even *imagine* that *I* could love in vain, nor believe that a person once preferred by me could ever think of another.

These two concise and simple sentences contained a compliment more gratifying to my *amour propre* than all the eulogiums that ever had been poured into my ear; and what woman forgets or remains indifferent to the man, who considers her irresistible?

Anxious to disprove the assertion of my former attachment to Lord Clydesdale, I now assumed a more than ordinary gaiety. I referred with an air of perfect indifference to past scenes in Italy; had even resolution enough to name Lord Clydesdale, and spoke of his marriage, as if he had never stood in any other relation to me than a mere common acquaintance. I stole a glance at Lord Wyndermere, to observe what effect this seeming indifference had on him; and was gratified by remarking that his countenance betrayed a more than usual expression of satisfaction.

From this evening, I found myself continually in the society of my new admirer. Invited to the same houses, we were drawn together without either of us having the air of seeking any intercourse. By degrees, his reserve wore away, and his looks and manner assumed more of softness and tenderness towards me. Still, no word of love was breathed; and I, to say the truth, began to fear his objections to an heiress were indeed insurmountable. It was not that I loved, or even fancied that I loved him; for the depth and force of my former unhappy attachment had been such as to convince me I should never love again. But the peculiarity of my position, and my dislike to finding myself *en tiers* with Lord and Lady Westonville, led me to think with complacency of avoiding such a dilemma by rewarding the romantic and disinterested affection of Lord Wyndermere with my hand and fortune.

Affairs stood in this position, when the absence of the new married couple, which, from the arranged four weeks of its duration, had grown into twice that length of time, was drawing to a close: and I was thinking, with no pleasurable feelings, of enacting the part of witness to their connubial felicity, when Mrs. Temple Clarendon asked me whether I had observed how much smitten with me poor Lord Wyndermere was. I affected to doubt the truth of the statement; and remarked that a man in love was not likely to be so reserved and distant with the object of it.

This led to an animated declaration on her part that *she* had been aware of his violent and hopeless passion from its commencement, which dated from the day he beheld me for the first time. She eloquently painted his despair at feeling an attachment which, from the difference in our fortunes, must be a hopeless one; but which, nevertheless, would terminate but with his existence. His pride and delicacy opposed obstacles to his avowal of his feelings, which a belief that they were not repugnant to me could alone overcome; and she entreated, nay, implored that I would authorise her, who was the sincere and disinterested friend of both Lord Wyndermere and myself, to give him to understand that he was not disagreeable to me. The warmth and earnestness of her pleading won on me; and, aided by the insidious foe within my breast, vanity, led me to believe all that she asserted. She particularly dwelt on the circumstance of Lord Wyndermere's having hitherto never felt the influence of the tender passion, a circumstance, above all others, the most calculated to gratify my fastidious and jealously disposed mind; and, as memory reverted to the pangs I had formerly endured from the knowledge of my former suitor's prior attachment, I reflected with complacency that in the present instance no such painful reminiscenes could ever wound me. I should be the only idol ever worshipped in the shrine of his heart—that heart which proved its delicacy and refinement by having so long resisted all the blandishments of female attractions, reserving itself for me—and me alone!

The consequence of these reflections was, that I suffered Mrs. Temple Clarendon to whisper hope to her friend; and, in a few minutes after he was at my feet. But, though he breathed vows, whose fervor were well calculated to establish in my mind the conviction of his love, he left me in doubt whether his pride did not still oppose an insuperable barrier to our union. He described the humiliating position of a man dependent on a wife, and always subject to the mortifying, the degrading

suspicion, of having been influenced to marry her by mercenary motives. So eloquently and feelingly did he speak on this subject, that it required no inconsiderable encouragement on my part to reconcile him to the idea; for, won by the passionate ardor of his manner, I was, or fancied, myself, touched by something approaching to a sympathy with his sentiments.

In short, when Mrs. Temple Clarendon joined the conference, and urged that, although an heiress, my attractions were too prominent to admit a doubt of *their* being the whole and sole charm in a lover's eyes, Lord Wyndermere's scruples were vanquished; and I consented to receive him as my accepted suitor. *He* was all gratitude and rapture; and *I* indulged in that self-complacency peculiar to vain people, when their *amour propre* has been gratified, and their pride flattered by conferring an obligation.

I returned to Walsingham Castle in time to receive Lord and Lady Westonville; who, all smiles and happiness, offered a perfect picture of conjugal felicity. Never had two months produced a more complete metamorphosis on any human being, than in *ma belle mere*. The object of unceasing attention and doting love, her presence conferring delight on her husband, and her slightest wish a law, she had acquired a cheerfulness and self-confidence that lent her new charms, without having lost any of that winning gentleness which had always characterised her.

When, during the very first evening of our meeting, I observed the all-engrossing attention she excited, and the evident *gêne* and constraint my presence imposed on her husband, I inwardly rejoiced that in a short time her *chaperonage* would no longer be required. She also, sincerely as she was attached to me, had, during our separation, learned too well to appreciate the comforts of a home where she alone was worshipped, not to experience a restraint at the prospect of becoming a permanent guest in mine.

This state of their feelings, though both of them endeavored to conceal it, was thoroughly visible to my keen perception; and I anticipated the satisfaction with which they would hail their freedom from the wearing thraldom of *chaperonage*. I was not disappointed. They listened to my avowal of my engagement with evident pleasure, approved my choice, and we all three appeared to become more attached to each other, in the anticipation of our mutual release.

The next day brought Mrs. Temple Clarendon, intent on the momentous business of marriage settlements. She had many suggestions to offer, all based on the absolute necessity of taking measures to avoid wounding the pride and delicacy of Lord Wyndermere's sentiments. His poverty, she said, rendered him so susceptible, that *I* must place him in a state of perfect independence; and that, without consultation or reference to him. I was as ready to act on this suggestion as she was to offer it; but I had only a life interest in my estates, they being strictly entailed on any children I might have. The personal property I was at liberty to bequeath; and I determined on placing it at his disposal. My guardians offered many objections to this scheme, but I was resolute; and the more so, from observing the perfect disinterestedness of my future husband. To be sure, had he even been disposed to study his own interest, he never could have more effectually taken care of it than by trusting to our mutual friend, Mrs. Temple Clarendon; who was indefatigable in her exertions and counsel on this subject.

In due time the law's delays having been abridged of half their tediousness, by the persevering endeavors of Mrs. Temple Clarendon, I was led to the hymeneal altar, nothing loth; but with no warmer sentiment towards him on whom I bestowed my hand and fortune, than an admiration of his personal attractions and a sense of gratitude for his devoted attachment.

Months rolled on, his attention to me unremitting, and my affection to him daily increasing, awakened into life by the constant and impassioned demonstrations of his. I was now in that state in which ladies are said to "wish to be who love their lords;" and I looked forward with feelings of new delight to the prospect of becoming a mother: when, one day, Lord Wyndermere, in returning from his accustomed ride, was thrown from his horse, brought home senseless, and expired in a few hours.

I will not dwell on the affliction into which this sad event plunged me. For many weeks my life was in imminent danger: and the hope of maternity deserted me, now when such a blessing alone could have consoled me for the bereavement I had sustained.

Those who have lost a husband, ere he had ceased to be a lover, ere a frown had ever curved his brow, or a harsh word escaped his lips, can alone imagine the grief

and desolation of my heart at this calamity. The very circumstance of my belief in the passionate fervor of his love, and the consciousness that mine was of a much less warm character, being in fact only an affectionate friendship founded on a grateful sense of his devotion to me, added to the poignancy of my regret. I reproached myself for having previously to my acquaintance with him, exhausted the energies of my heart in an attachment to another, while he had reserved all the warmth of his for me. The soothing attentions of Lady Westonville, who, with her lord, had flown to me the moment that intelligence of my bereavement had reached her, were ineffectually used to console me. I encouraged rather than attempted to subdue my grief; for an oblivion of it appeared to me nothing short of an insult to the memory of the dead. How I wished to have Mrs. Temple Clarendon with me; she, who so highly esteemed the dear departed, could better sympathise with my regret than Lady Westonville, who had seen too little of him to be aware of his merits. But unfortunately, Mrs. Temple Clarendon was absent from England; having made an excursion to the south of France two months before for the benefit of her health, which had lately been in a declining state.

I used to take a melancholy pleasure, when again able to leave my chamber, in sitting for hours in the dressing room of my lost husband, in which I had ordered every thing appertaining to his toilette and wardrobe to be left as when he inhabited it. The books he had preserved and marked, the unfinished letters on his table were now become dear and precious mementos of him in my eyes. Why was I so unfortunate as to be deprived of this consolation melancholy though it was? and why did my evil stars conduct me to a discovery that banished all soft regrets, and rendered me for the rest of my existence, cold, suspicious, and unloving?

In an unlucky hour, my heart still filled with fond remembrances of my husband, it occurred to me to open his escritoir, the key of which hung to the chain of his watch, which now always rested on my table as a sacred relic. Its drawers contained only a few letters of little interest from friends, and the billets I had written to him during the epoch that intervened from my acceptance of him to our marriage. I bedewed them with my tears, as I marked how carefully he had arrranged and treasured them; and my regret was renewed by this little proof of affection. In replacing them a burst of weeping led me to incline my head on both arms on the desk part of the escritoir; and in the action, I involuntarily pressed a secret spring, which flew open, and discovered a cavity in which were many letters and a large gold medallion.

An indescribable presentiment of evil seized me at the sight; and I almost determined on closing the escritoir, and never to examine the contents of the secret cavity. Would that I had persevered in this resolution! but curiosity, or a stronger motive prevailed, and I opened the medallion.

Never shall I forget the feeling of that moment, when the portrait of Mrs. Temple Clarendon, a most striking resemblance, met my astonished gaze. No doubt of the relation in which the original of the picture stood to him, to whom such a gift was made, could exist; for a long lock of hair, and an Italian inscription of the warmest nature, but too clearly explained it.

The medallion fell from my trembling hands, and my eyes involuntarily closed as if to shut out the sight that had thrust daggers to my heart. I shook with the violence of my emotions, as my tortured brain recalled a thousand circumstances, received by me as proofs of an honorable friendship between my husband and Mrs. Temple Clarendon, but to which the portrait and its indelicate inscription now lent a totally different coloring.

So then I, was their dupe! their weak and credulous dupe! and all my fond dreams of love and friendship were destroyed for ever! Anger, violent and powerless anger, arose like a whirlwind in my breast, blighting and searing every soft and womanly feeling, and replacing the tender sorrow that so lately usurped my thought, by a jealous and impotent rage that would have fain called up the dead from his everlasting sleep, to wreak on him some mighty vengeance.

Burning tears of passion chaced the soft ones of grief from my eyes. I vowed to punish the false and vicious woman whose dupe I had been by a public exposure of her shame; and I was almost tempted to imprecate curses on the memory of him, whose death I had so lately mourned with anguish. The perusal of the letters nearly maddened me, for the whole nefarious plot was revealed in them. Lord Wyndemere had long been the lover of Mrs. Temple Clarendon; but as the unhallowed *liaison* had taken place on the Continent,

and appearances were strictly guarded between them, it had never been talked of in *England*. When it first occurred, it was his intention to have married her, and with her large fortune repair his decayed one; but on discovering the clause by which, in case of her forming a second matrimonial alliance, she was to forfeit her wealth, he abandoned all thought of adopting this course; especially as she was as little desirous as himself to forge chains that would reduce her from splendor, to comparative indigence. She knew my wealth, had heard of the weakness and vanity of my character, and as their passion was no longer in its first wild hey-day they agreed to return to England and concoct a plan to catch the heiress. How well they had succeeded, my marriage, and the lavish generosity I displayed towards my *disinterested* husband, has proved. Oh! how I loathed them, and despised myself, as with burning cheeks, throbbing temples, and tortured heart, I perused the details of their artifice and guilt.

"I give you great credit," wrote this shameless woman, "for your ready tact in taking advantage of Lady Arabella's approach in the conservatory, when you were conversing with Mr. Fauconberg. The few sentences you uttered on that occasion, will lay the foundation of the superstructure I mean to erect. Such are her vanity and folly, that it only requires a tenth part of the address we possess, to secure her, and her fortune. You must enact the silent, despairing, but adoring lover, for a short time, and success will inevitably crown our efforts. After all she is handsome, and not a greater fool than nine-tenths of the girls of her age; therefore, you are not so much to be pitied as you would fain have me believe. With regard to pecuniary matters, leave the arrangement of all them to me; *I* can suggest what it would appear mercenary and indelicate in *you* to propose. Your *role* is, to affect a most romantic love, and a *fierté* with regard to fortune, that will, aided by my advice, compel her to display a lavish generosity."

Each, and all, of the letters contained similar proofs of dissimulation, and wickedness. The correspondence, subsequently to my ill-fated marriage, was carried on between the guilty pair with even an increased warmth, leaving no doubt of their continned criminality; for the last letter received from this atrocious hypocrite, stated, that he was wrong to blame her for going abroad, as, had she longer remained in England, her increas'ng shape must have excited suspicions destructive to that reputation which she had hitherto so successfully preserved free from taint.

For many months, the rage and indignation to which I was a constant prey, sensibly impaired my health; and change of air and scene having been prescribed for me, I left England, attended by a numerous suite, and passed many years in visiting Germany, Italy, and Sicily. My invincible dislike to encountering Mrs. Temple Clarendon, prevented me from returning to Walsingham Castle; for, although I had long abandoned all thoughts of making her conduct known, I felt that I could not meet her without betraying my contempt and dislike.

I kept up a constant correspondence with Lady Westonville, who became the mother of a large family, all of whom she lived long enough to see happily established: and when, after twenty years' absence from my native land, I returned to its shores, I experienced from her the same affectionate friendship that had ever characterised her conduct to me.

The death of Mrs. Temple Clarendon removed my principal objection to returning to Walsingham Castle. She died, as she had lived, maintaining, until the last, a hypocritical decorum, that served to conceal her vices. She bequeathed a considerable fortune to a young French lady, whom she had, some twenty years before, adopted: and whom she represented as the orphan daughter of a dear friend in the South of France; but whose remarkable resemblance to Lord Wyndermere and herself, left no doubt, on my mind at least, of the relation in which she had stood to her.

Never shall I forget the feelings I experienced when, after an absence of above twenty years, I returned to Walsingham Castle; no longer the young and blooming creature that had left it, but the staid, sober and faded woman of forty-five retaining, alas! many of the faults of my youth but none of its elasticity of spirits or hopes.

I had not passed so many years of my life without receiving several matrimonial overtures, but they had all been imperiously rejected; for the deceptive conduct of Lord Wyndermere had rendered me too suspicious, ever again to expose myself to the chance of similar treatment.

And yet my heart still yearned for something to love; some object to lean upon in my descent to old age, that period in which woman most needs the support of affec-

tion. But if, in the bloom of youth and beauty, I had been sought only for my fortune, how could I hope, as these advantages were fast disappearing, that I could ever inspire the sentiment so essential to happiness? Each year, as its flight stole away some personal attraction, rendered me still more suspicious of the professions of regard made to me; hence, I closed my heart to any new attachment, though that heart pined for the blessings of sympathy and affection.

It was a lovely summer's evening when I arrived at Walsingham Castle. A crowd of aged domestics and retainers pressed forward to welcome me; and the whole scene so exactly resembled that which was presented to me when, nearly a quarter of a century before, I first visited the lovely spot, that I could almost fancy not more than a year had elapsed since I last beheld it. The beauty of the scene, and the joy of those who welcomed me, encouraged the illusion. My heart felt lighter than for long years it had been wont to do; my step became more elastic, as I again paced the halls of my paternal mansion, and as I gazed on the well known objects around, now tinged by the glowing and golden beams of the setting sun, some portion of my youth and its hopes seemed restored to me.

I ascended to my chamber with nimbler feet than I had long known; and threw myself into a bergere, delighted to find myself again in my ancestral home. The hangings, the tasteful and elegant furniture, and ornaments of my luxurious suite of apartments, had been kept carefully covered; and now looked as well as in their pristine freshness. All appeared so exactly as I had left it, that I was tempted to doubt the possibility that four-and twenty years had indeed elapsed since I had last beheld it.

I removed my bonnet and cloak; and approached the mirror to arrange my cap, *that* mirror, in which I had so often, with pride and pleasure contemplated my own image—an image which was still vividly fresh in my recollection. But when my eyes fell on the one it now reflected, I drew back affrighted, and all the consciousness of my altered face for the first time seemed suddenly to burst upon me. Tears fell from my eyes—yes, weak and foolish as it now appears to me, I wept for my departed youth; and for that beauty of which the faithful mirror too plainly assured me, no remnant existed.

Accustomed to see my face daily, the ravages that time had made on it, had never before struck me as now. My feelings had grown cold, as my visage assumed the wrinkles of age; and hitherto I had scarcely marked the melancholy change in my aspect; or if I had remarked it, it occasioned me little regret. But *now*, when all around me, looking fresh and unchanged, as when first beheld, brought back the past vividly before me, renewing for a few brief moments the joyfulness of youth, I had been insensibly beguiled into expecting to see in the mirror, the same bright face it had formerly reflected. These were the feelings that made the sad alteration in my personal aspect appal me; and I wondered how it had hitherto caused me so little regret.

It was long ere I could conquer my repugnance to look in that glass again; but vanity which had driven me in disgust away, again led me to consult it. It whispered that the greater the change in my face, the greater was the necessity for concealing or ameliorating its defects by a studious attention to dress. Consequently I now devoted a more than ordinary time to the duties of the toilette; and in the course of a few months learned to think, that with the aid of a little art judiciously applied, I was still what might be called a fine woman.

A short time afterwards, Lady Percival came to see me, and pressed me to dine at her house.

"You will meet on old acquaintance," said she; "for Lord Clydesdale is staying with us."

"Is he alone?" asked I in trepidation, my foolish heart beating with a quicker pulsation.

"Yes," replied Lady Percival, "quite alone; ever since he lost poor dear Lady Clydesdale, he comes every year to spend a week or two.

"What, is Lady Clydesdale dead?" demanded I, in an agitation that I thought I should never again experience.

"Is it possible that you did not know it?" answered she, calmly. "Why, she has been dead these five years; and his only child, a daughter, has been married above a year to the Duke of Warrenborough. Poor dear Lady Clydesdale was a charming person. Do you know, my dear friend, that many people considered her to bear a striking likeness to you? It is very sad and solitary for him to be compelled to live alone; for, though no longer young, he is still a very agreeable person."

How many thoughts and hopes did this communication awaken! He, the only man I had ever really loved, was again free; and a thousand tender recollections of our former attachment floated through my mind, as I reflected on his solitary life so resembling my own. Yes, we might meet, might again feel some portion of that affection which once filled our hearts; and, though in youth we had been separated, we might now form a union that would enable us to pass our old age together, released from the lonely, cheerless solitude in which we both were placed.

Lady Percival, observing that I had not accepted her invitation, renewed it, adding, "Do pray come, dear Lady Wyndermere! Lord Clydesdale will be so disappointed if you do not; I told him I intended to ask you, and he said he should be very glad indeed to see you again."

This sentence decided my acceptance of her invitation, for it encouraged the fond hopes that were awakened in my breast; and a thousand visions of happy days, past and to come, floated in my imagination.

From the moment that Lady Percival left me, until the hour, three days after, that saw me drive up to her door, I thought of nothing, dreamt of nothing, but my interview with Lord Clydesdale. How would he look, how address me, would he betray any agitation? were questions continually occurring to me.

Never had I taken more pains with my dress than on that momentous day. One robe was found to be too grave; and another was thrown aside as not suiting my complexion, half-a-dozen caps and as many turbans were tried, before the one deemed the most becoming was determined on; and I experienced no little portion of embarrassment, when I observed the astonishment of my *femme de chambre*, at this my unusual fastidiousness with regard to my toilette. At length, it was completed; and casting many a lingering glance at my mirror, I flattered myself that few, if any, women of my age could have looked better. If mine was no longer a figure or face to captivate the young and unthinking, it might satisfy the less scrupulous taste of the elderly and reflecting. But above all, *he* who had seen the temple in its pristine beauty, would not despise it now, though desecrated and ravaged by the hand of time.

As I reflected on the change wrought on my person by time, that foe to beauty, the thought of how the destroyer's touch might have operated on *his* occurred to me. Was *he very much* altered? But no! age might have taken from the graceful elasticity of his step, added some of her furrows to his brow, and tinged his dark locks with its silvery hue, but it could not have destroyed the noble and distinguished character of his manly beauty!

How my heart throbbed as I entered the library of Lord Percival! I positively felt as if not more than twenty summers had flown over my head; and dreaded, yet wished to see Lord Clydesdale. After the usual salutations had passed, Lady Percival led me to a large easy chair; reclined in which, with one foot enveloped in a fleecy stocking, and a velvet shoe that looked large enough for an inhabitant of Brobdignag, was an old man with a rubicund face, a head, the summit of which was bald and shining, graced by a few straggling locks of snowy white.

"This, dear Lady Wyndermere, is your old acquaintance Lord Clydesdale," whispered Lady Percival.

I positively shrank back astonished and incredulous.

"Ah! I see you do not recognise me," said the venerable-looking old gentleman before me, holding forth a hand on each of the fingers of which were unseemly protuberances, ycleped chalk stones. "I am such a martyr to the gout, that I am unable to rise to receive you, but it affords me great pleasure to see your ladyship in such good health."

I could scarcely collect myself sufficiently to make a suitable reply. All the air-built visions my fancy had formed for the last few days were dashed to the earth, as I contemplated the infirm septagenarian before me, and remembered that he was only some ten or twelve years my senior; a circumstance which never occurred to me as disadvantageous before. Not a trace of his former personal attractions remained; nay, it would be difficult to believe, judging from his present appearance, that any had ever existed. It gave me, however, some satisfaction to observe that he seemed surprised at my having preserved so much of my former comeliness; and I will own that I was malicious enough, as Lord Percival led me to the dining-room, to which Lord Clydesdale was slowly limping, supported by his *valet de chambre* and a crutch, to affect a much more than ordinary quickness of pace and agility.

"And this," thought I, is the man who has caused me so many sighs, who has inflicted on me days of care, and nights without sleep."

"The thing seemed really preposterous, and I could have smiled at my own illusions; illusions that might have been indulged even to my last hour, had not one glance at their object dispelled them for ever.

I took a spiteful pleasure in recounting during dinner, the long walks I affected to be in the daily habit of taking; and attempted to avenge myself on the unconscious object of my resentment, for all the pain he had ever inflicted, by now making him feel the disparity between us. I caught his eye more than once fixed on my face; and fancied that its expression indicated more of surprise or envy, than of tender reminiscences. Perhaps it was to punish me that he talked with evident pleasure of the delights of being a grandpapa; the new interest it excited when all others had nearly ceased, and the refuge it afforded against that dreary and loveless solitude to which childless old age was exposed.

This was the last day of my illusions; or of my being enabled to enact the youthful. To diminish the ungraceful expression of my figure, I had discarded two under draperies, in the shape of quilted silk petticoats. This imprudent piece of coquetry exposed me to a severe cold; from the effects of which I never entirely recovered: and I now suffer from a weakness of the limbs, that nearly precludes my moving without assistance. The "childless, loveless" solitude to which alas! I find myself condemned, frequently reminds me of Lord Clydesdale's remarks on such a fate: and I am forced to admit that time would pass more happily in caressing a race of dear chubby grandchildren, than in the vain task of correcting the disagreeable personal habits of my poor *Dame de Compagnie.* Ay, or than even in committing these Confessions to paper, in the as vain hope of being amused, or of amusing; in which last disappointment I fear that my readers will only have too much reason to sympathise with me.

THE

VICTIMS OF SOCIETY.

THE

VICTIMS OF SOCIETY.

PREFACE.

The design of personal satire is sometimes justly, more often erroneously, attributed to those who attempt to paint the manners of the day; and, through the character of a fiction, to delineate the vices or the follies of real life. But as one who refuses the shelter of the anonymous is usually supposed to reject its privileges, so the Author of these volumes ventures to hope that, by prefixing her name to her Work, she offers, at least, a guarantee of her desire neither to excite the fear, nor to wound the vanity, of individuals.

They who move in a highly artificial state of society, acquire, however, a kind of family resemblance; and every general description is susceptible of personal application: while, on the other hand, it is a common disposition among readers to reverse the destiny of Peter Schlemil, and hunt after a substance to every bodiless and visionary shadow:—For, whether it be from curiosity or affection, it is certainly true that we are apt to take up a novel as we go to an exhibition, less to criticise the creations of fancy, than to search for the portraits of our friends.

It is not then a superfluous precaution seriously to declare, that the characters of this work are invented, not copied, as the representatives of a class, or the agents of a moral: and the greater the number of persons (whether those who sully, or those who adorn society) that each sketch may be thought to resemble, the more, perhaps, the Author will have obtained the object of her Work, and proved the assertion of her Preface.

LADY AUGUSTA VERNON TO LADY MARY HOWARD.

Vernon Hall, June.

I am sixteen to-day, dearest Mary, and feel so happy and joyous, that I must make you a partaker of my felicity. Would that you were here! for, *hélas!* it will be three long days ere this can reach you; and who knows if, at the expiration of that period, brief as it is, I shall be still as contented? And yet, why not? Have I not all that should ensure happiness? A dear, kind, indulgent father, who spoils, and a mild, sweet mother, who corrects me only with a sigh, or a look of more than usual solicitude. I am, as you have often told me, a strange wayward creature —giddy as a school-boy when he first escapes to his play-ground; and yet, with gleams of melancholy presentiment, as if I felt that there is that within me which may preclude lasting peace.

The truth is, my father and mother are too partial to my good qualities, (if, indeed, I possess any,) and too blind, or too tolerating, to my faults. Should I ever meet with less lenient judges, how miserable I shall be, and how *unamiable* may I become! for, I am too unused to censure to be capable of patiently enduring it. And yet, how can I hope to find the same absorbing affection, the same forbearing kindness, that I have experienced from my infancy? But, no; I will not allow any forebodings of the future to cast a gloom over the delightful present. Am I not uncertain as an April morning? I began, all sunshine, with telling you of my happiness; and here am I, clouded over by doubts of its continuance. Thus, it is with me ever—smiles or tears; and both equally beyond my control.

Are you not dying with curiosity to learn the cause of the happiness announced in the second line of this letter? You, who are two years my senior, and ten years wiser, if wisdom may be rated by years, will smile, when I confess, that much of this elation was caused by my dear mother's presenting me with her beautiful *parure* of pearls; and my kind father's giving me a hundred pounds, in the prettiest new pocket book that ever was seen. Yet, before you condemn me for being delighted by "barbaric pearls," or "sordid gold," let me tell you, that the words which accompanied the gifts caused the happiness, more than the gifts themselves; though I am not insensible to their charms. "Augusta, my precious child!" said my mother, in that mild and earnest way, so peculiar to her; "here, is your birth-day present: may you ever continue as pure and spotless as the pearls which I now bestow on you."

I threw myself into her arms, and wept on her bosom, for my heart was too full to speak; and I felt, at the moment, that I would rather have died there, than have caused her to shed a tear. She led me to my father's study, who, embracing me, put the pretty pocket-book I told you of into my hand, saying, "Take this, my own Gusty, and when its contents are expended, bring it back to me, and they shall be replaced. You are my darling, my only child—my comfort!" Then, as I clasped his neck, and pressed his dear face, I felt his tears moisten my cheek. With such parents, have I not cause to be contented? Yes, I am; and will be, dearest Mary, your *happy*, as well as affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA VERNON.

LADY MARY HOWARD TO LADY AUGUSTA VERNON.

Howard Castle, June.

DEAREST AUGUSTA:—Were I inclined to play the Mentor, I should lecture you on the proneness to give way to first impulses, which I have always remarked in you; and which is so evident all through your last letter. You say that "you have a melancholy presentiment of having that within you which may preclude lasting happiness." Does this not look like acknowledging, that you have faults which may conquer you, instead of your conquering them; and who with such a belief, could hope for happiness? Happiness is a rare plant, that seldom takes root on earth: few ever enjoyed it, except for a brief period; the search after it is rarely rewarded by the discovery. But, there is an admirable substitute for it, which all may hope to attain, as its attainment depends wholly on self—and that is, a contented spirit. This panacea for the ills of life can never belong to those who are governed *by*, instead of governing their feelings. Feelings are delightful acquaintances; and, like acquaintances, they are charming during prosperity; but *principles* are our *true friends*, rescuing us from danger, and consoling us in affliction. Cultivate *principles*, then, dearest Augusta, and learn to make feelings as subservient to them as good servants should be to their masters, knowing that wisdom and justice guide them. A ship on the trackless main, without a rudder or compass, is not in a more fearful state than a young and lovely woman without fixed principles, abandoned to the sole government of her feelings.

And now, let me tell you, that this will, probably, be the last lecture you will receive from Mary *Howard*. But do not, therefore, think you are to escape future admonitions. No, dearest Augusta; Mary Delaward, in her matron character, will continue to give her giddy, but dearly loved friend, as many lectures (when required) as sober-minded Mary Howard ever has done.

All is finally fixed for my marriage: the probation, to which Lord Delaward at first submitted with so bad a grace, is expired; and I now may become a wife, with that indispensable, and *only* surety for domestic peace—a perfect reliance on the principles of a husband. That I preferred him to all others, you have known, and you know, also, that, when after his return from Italy he sought my hand, I had no means of judging of his tastes or pursuits, except by waiting a year, and seeing or hearing how he occupied his time. He has passed triumphantly through the dangerous ordeal of a season in London, and an autumn and winter in the society of his friends, at their residences, and at Delaward Park. He has neither frequented Crockford's, nor attended every meeting at Newmarket; nor hunted at Melton; nor formed intimacies with dissolute men; nor flirted with any of the women who are more remarkable for attracting admiration than for repelling admirers. In short, he is not a young man of fashion; or, rather, a fashionable man; and therefore, I am not

afraid that he will find clubs more agreeable than home, or any other man's wife more to his taste, than his own.

My father has written to yours, to request that he, and your good mother, will conduct your giddy self to Howard Castle, to be present at the nuptial ceremony. This will be a good occasion for you to display your pearls, on the possession of which I congratulate you: and to gratify, by your presence, your fondly attached

MARY HOWARD.

LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

Howard Castle.

HERE we are, my dear Caroline, safely arrived; and, according to promise, I give you an account of all that is going on in this place. Dear Mary Howard is as amiable, as handsome, and as *reasonable*, as ever; and seems to me unaccountably tranquil, for one who is on the point of marrying the man of her choice. I should be all in a flutter on such an occasion, not knowing whether to laugh or cry, and doing both by turns. Lord Delaward is very good-looking, but has a sort of dignified gravity about him that is rather chilling and imposing; at least, such is its effect on me. There is a respectful deference in his manner towards Mary, that checks even my habitual familiarity: it is as though he wished to intimate, that *she* whom *he* had chosen was not to be lightly approached; consequently, I find myself involuntarily assuming a more reverential demeanor towards her—not that I am less attached to her than before. I wonder, Caroline, whether *I* shall ever excite this respectful feeling in the breast of any man. There is something very flattering in it, too; yet, I should like to be more wildly, more passionately loved than Mary is; and I should be addicted to *showing* my power over my lover, as well as exerting it. How delightful to alarm, to agitate him—to make him feel as if he could never be sure of me! instead of being, as Lord Delaward appears to be, as certain of Mary's unchangeable affection as he is of his own.

I write all that comes into my giddy head to you, because I know you to be as giddy as myself. I dared not have addressed half this idle trifling to Mary Howard, who views, in her future husband, the companion with whom she is to share those trials of life from which even the most fortunate are not exempt; while I should think only of the lover, with whom I was to enjoy its pleasures. Mary's is the just view, mine the too common one.

Lord Delaward presented a superb suit of diamonds to Mary this morning; they were in a case lined with blue velvet, and really shone like stars in the azure sky. They did not at all dazzle her, though, I confess, they did me. She seemed to value them only as being *his* gift, and in consequence of their having never been worn, save by virtuous women; for his mother and grandmother were remarkable for their decorous lives; but *I*, if the truth must be told, should have valued them for their own intrinsic beauty; and not have given a thought to their former owners. I often wish that I could be as good and as rational as Mary Howard; and she sometimes makes me good, if not wise, by the influence she possesses over me. *Mais, hélas!* it does not last long; for a few flattering speeches, a new dress, or a trinket, excite me to fresh levities, and all my praiseworthy resolutions fade away. I must leave off, as I am summoned to the drawing-room; and shall resume my pen to-morrow, after the wedding.

I never fancied that I should weep at a wedding; yet, I have done so; and so, I think, would even you, had you been present, little as you are given to the indulgence of tears. There is something solemn in witnessing the ratification of a union that death alone can dissolve, when the individuals forming it are fully penetrated with the importance, the holiness of the duties they are undertaking. Mary (no longer Mary *Howard*) preferred being married in the parish church to having the ceremony performed at home: I ventured to ask her the reason yesterday, when we were alone; and she told me, that, having been baptized, confirmed, and having received the sacrament in that church, she wished to pledge her faith at the same altar.

"My mother, too, sleeps there," added Mary, with a tear trembling in her eye; and this is a strong inducement to me; it is as though it sanctified still more solemnly my marriage."

A pensiveness pervaded the whole party last evening. Lord Howard was evidently thinking of his approaching separation from his child, while she was continually stealing looks at him, as if to im-

print his features in her memory, though, at each glance, her eyes became suffused with tears. Lord Delaward made Lord Howard promise to join them in a fortnight; and pressed it so strongly, that it was easy to see that he considered this the best mode of consoling Mary.

My dear good papa and mamma seemed to think that it was *I* that was going to be married; for they looked at me as often and as tenderly as if I was to be whisked off from them to-morrow in a travelling-carriage and four, and I began to fear, that they would make up their minds to take measures for my leading a life of single blessedness, now that all the pain of parting with a child was "brought home to their business and their bosoms" by witnessing Lord Howard's chagrin.

The old servants (and nearly all of them are old) seemed to partake the general depression of spirits; and I continually caught them regarding their young mistress with reverential affection. I know that you will expect a descriptiou of the bride's dress, but I am thinking too much of *her*, to enter into a detail of her toilet. It was all that was proper for such an occasion; but, her pale cheek, trembling lip, and tearful eyes, prevented even my giddy self from attending to aught else. The children of the school that Mary founded here, all attended at the church, headed by their mistress, and in their Sunday clothes, each carrying a bouquet. The clergyman who performed the ceremony is the same who baptized Mary; and he read the service most impressively. She repeated the words in a clear and firm voiee, as if she wished all present to hear her; and when Lord Delaward placed the ring on her finger, she looked at the monument of her mother as if to beseech the blessing of her whose remains are reposing beneath it. Tears were continually stealing down the cheeks of Lord Howard; his thoughts appeared to be divided between the wife he had lost, and the child he was then resigning.

When we left the church, the children presented their bouquets to Lady Delaward, and our carriages were nearly filled with flowers, as, followed by the blessings of the poor, who all assembled to see their benefactress, we returned to Howard Castle.

The *déjeûner*, though a very splendid one, was little honored by the appetites of the guests. The father and daughter were too much affected to admit of any thing like cheerfulness in those around them. When the repast had terminated, and Lord Delaward's carriage was announced, Mary affectionately reminded my father and mother of their promise to remain at Howard Castle, until the day her father is to set out to join her at Delaward Park, where we are also invited.

The parting between Lord Howard and Mary was truly affecting, and the more so that it was evident each had endeavored, for the sake of the other, to suppress all manifestation or emotion. When the carriage of the bridegroom drove away, Lord Howard entered his study, followed by my father and mother, who shared his grief, if they could not remove it; and they are all three, at this moment, talking over the happy prospects of the new-married couple. The tenantry and the poor have been plentifully regaled in the park; so that, while within the castle *all* has been melancholy, the greatest hilarity prevails without.

I have now written you an epistle as large as the *Times* newspaper with a supplementary sheet, for which you ought to be very thankful, as I have not been in an epistolary mood. I must be present at the marriage of some madcap like yourself, to remove the impression produced on me by that which I have just witnessed; and to bring me back to the comfortable belief, which you have tried to inculcate, that it is only a ceremony established to give ladies the power of obtaining homes and wardrobes, diamonds, and new carriages, and various other delightful things, too numerous to name: and all this good only taxed with the appendage of a—husband. Your affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA VERNON.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO THE LADY A. VERNON.

Do you know, *ma chère*, that you are growing quite romantic and sentimental? Your whole description of the marriage of your sober-minded friend was worthy of some lachrymose novel, and not at all alike your *léger* style; which I am candid enough to acknowledge that I prefer. Lord Delaward seems to be a sort of modern copy of Sir Charles Grandison; and presents himself to my imagination in a court-dress, with a *chapeau-bras*. I am sure that he and his bride will be models of domestic felicity, doing all the good in their power, and avoiding all the evil; superintending their household, establishing charity-schools,

setting the best examples, and, content to "live in decencies for ever," arrive at a good old age, the slaves to what they call their principles; but, which in dear France, where my happiest days have been past, we designate by another and a better name —prejudices.

I almost begin to despair of making any thing of you, *chère Augusta*, while you are so easily influenced by those around you. You resemble the chameleon, which is said to take the colors of whatever it is brought in contact with. This must not be. Influence others *tant que vous voudrez;* but if you wish to maintain your independence, permit not others to influence you.

What could be more absurd than the maudlin sentimentality of Lord Howard at his daughter's marrying well—an object which, I dare say, it has been his constant aim to accomplish ever since she passed her third lustre? Then, Lady Mary finds it a very melancholy thing, forsooth, to marry the man of her choice, with a high station, large fortune, and all appliances to boot; because, it takes her from her dull old paternal castle, her stupid papa, and her—charity-school! Do not be very much offended with me, *ma chère petite*, when I confess that I laughed heartily at your sentimental description of all this absurd drivelling. You talk of the solemnity of the ratification of a union which *death* alone can dissolve, quite forgetting how often the House of Lords performs this service; as a reference to "Debrett's Peerage" can certify. Had you reflected on the possibility of this less *solemn* dissolution of Hymen's chains, a possibility which is always taken into consideration by the lawyers employed by the contracting parties, if not by the contracting parties themselves, you would have felt less melancholy on the occasion. Indeed, your lachrymose sympathies appeared to me quite incomprehensible; and I expected to have Lady Mary's tears ultimately accounted for by the discovery of some interesting young swain in the neighborhood, the son of the parson or doctor, who had ventured to regard her beauties, as the dogs bay the moon. I could fill up a very pretty little vaudeville from such a subject; whereas, of the reality, as you viewed it, one could make nothing. We live in an age, *ma bonne Augusta*, when none but exciting subjects have any interest. Tears are now only shed when great crimes are their source; domestic feelings are *passés de mode;* and those who would awaken sympathy, must dare guilt. Look at the theatres in France —where horror on horror accumulates, and plaudits "loud and deep" follow every scene of guilt, and every sentiment of reckless daring! Look at the crimes every day committed in that land of passion, where naught sleeps save reason; and where events, public and private, succeed each other so quickly, that the mind is kept in a continual and delighted state of excitement. Had your friend Lady Mary, and her sapient *père*, been inhabitants of dear France, they would have found neither time nor scene for their domestic sentimentalities. She would have been thinking of her *trousseau*, and the envy it would excite—or the last novel of Eugene, Sue, or Balzac, or of all these; for in France a woman's head can embrace simultaneously many more subjects than ours can contain in succession, during the lapse of a twelvemonth. And hence their general freedom from concentrated or violent affections; a freedom that renders them *toujours gai, et toujours amiable*—they dispensing to the *many* the smiles and *petits soins* that we reserve for the *few*. But to return to you, *ma chère*. Let me beseech you to abandon *l'école sentimentale, c'est mauvais genre à present:* let me, also, remind you to be careful of not allowing my letters to be seen by any eye save your own. I write to you *à cœur ouvert;* and should detest having my hasty and inartificial composition subjected to the perusal and criticism of some one who might not be able to understand them, or *votre amie*, CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE LADY AUGUSTA VERNON.

Delaward Park.

I AM impatient to hear from you, dearest Augusta, how my beloved father supports this, our first separation. He has written to me in a cheerful tone; but he is so prone to conceal his own sufferings, in order not to increase those of others, that I fear his cheerfulness was only assumed to tranquillise me. I have been so accustomed to refer to him on all occasions, to administer to his happiness, and to derive mine from him, that, even surrounded with blessings as I am, I want his presence, to be as contented and as grateful as I ought to be. How thankful should we be to the Almighty, when He gives us parents whom we can love and reverence, as well

as obey—when affection and duty go hand in hand! This has been my blessed lot, and is likewise yours, my dear Augusta. There is, however, one difference between our parents, though it proceeds from the same cause, acting diversely—namely, excessive affection. Mine never permitted me to have a secret from them, or to receive a letter from any of my companions that was not submitted to their inspection. This plan was adopted when I was so young, that I could not understand its motive; and, when I grew older, the habit was so formed, that I knew not whether it was continued by their desire or my own. They reasoned with me on the fallacies often contained in the letters of my young friends, and on the inferences which my inexperience led me to draw from them. They taught me to reflect, and to distinguish between what was erroneous and what was praiseworthy in sentiment; and to judge of actions by principle alone, and not by prejudices. From how many false impressions did my beloved parents rescue me, by exerting for me their reason, ere my own had acquired sufficient force to protect me! Yours, with equal affection, impose no restraint on your intercourse with your female friends. They never see your correspondence; consequently, cannot refute the false opinions it may contain, and, for the detection of which, your youth and inexperience unfit you. You are, therefore ,exposed to the danger of imbibing the sentiments of those who are less amiable and pure-minded than yourself; ere yet your principles are immutably fixed, or your reasoning powers sufficiently matured to enable you to reject the poison that may be thus proffered. You know, dear Augusta, that I am not malignant or censorious; and, therefore, will not suspect me of being influenced by unworthy feelings, when I tell you I am apprehensive that the purity of your mind may be sullied, and the goodness of your heart impaired, by your correspondence with Miss Montressor. When you mentioned, in the presence of Lord Delaward, that you frequently heard from her, did you not observe that he looked unusually grave? Knowing the sincerity of my affection for you, he has thought it his duty to inform me, that, from all he saw and heard of that young lady, in Italy, and in France, he considers an intimacy with her fraught with danger for one so young as yourself.

Miss Montressor prides herself on having conquered what she calls English prejudices, and adopted French opinions in their place. The most sacred objects and established usages—nay, the domestic affections—are made the subjects of her *persiflage;* and she is too anxious to pass for a *bel esprit* in society, to guard against being more than suspected of levity, irreligion, and heartlessness.

Break off your correspondence with her by degrees, or, if you have mental courage sufficient to *brusquer* it, do so; and call to mind the opinion of Lord Delaward expressed within a few minutes before I commenced this letter—an opinion which I have often heard my dear father repeat, —that there is more danger to a young and innocent female in an unrestrained correspondence with one of her own sex who is unprincipled and heartless, than in an acquaintance even with men of light character, who possess not equal opportunities of instilling the poison of their false opinions.

I tell you nothing of my happiness, my dear Augusta, but I hope you will soon witness it. It is the general custom for brides to write inflated descriptions of their felicity to their friends: look for none of these from me; and be assured that happiness, like beauty, can never be faithfully expressed by a picture, and perhaps the less easy it is to describe the more perfect it is.

Your affectionate

MARY DELAWARD.

THE LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

I CANNOT believe, dear Caroline, that you are really serious in half that you write to me; may I add, that I do not wish to think that you are? Indeed, you do not understand Lady Delaward's character; if you did, you would not imagine her to be a person affecting sentimentality herself, or encouraging its display in others. If you value my friendship, do not attempt to ridicule those I love and respect; for, though I give you full permission to laugh at me, I am peculiarly sensitive with regard to them.

The unbecoming levity with which you refer to the frequency and facility of divorce, both shocked and pained me. How could you jest on so grave a matter, or remind me of examples of conduct in our sex so humiliating to reflect on? It is this proneness to treat with ridicule subjects which should be ever exempt from its as-

saults, that often and seriously offends your good aunt, and alarms those whose good opinion I so much wish you to obtain. Conquer this unfeminine propensity, dear Caroline; for, be assured, its indulgence is highly injurious to you.

We dined yesterday at Lord Seymour's, where we met two London beaux; one Lord Annandale, and the other, Sir Henry Beaumont. The first is good looking, and has the appearance of being extremely well satisfied with himself, perhaps too much so: and yet, I like to see men of fashion possess a certain confidence of manner; it renders their attentions more flattering. Besides, he who greatly admires himself, must find many charms in that woman with whom he is disposed to share his hitherto self-engrossed admiration. Sir Henry Beaumont is not so good-looking as Lord Annandale; he has lank hair, which I detest; while Lord Annandale's floats in hyacinthine curls, and sets off his face to the greatest advantage.

The Ladies Seymour evidently wished to attract Lord Annandale, and he as evidently was so unmindful of their fascinations as to bestow a large share of his attention on me; which, to judge from their looks, was any thing but agreeable to them. They were forced to be content with the assiduities of Sir Henry Beaumont, who seemed almost afraid to look at me, when he observed that I had monopolised the entire attention of Lord Annandale. What a difference is there in the appearance and manner of Lord Annandale, and Lord Delaward! In the presence of the latter, I experienced a degree of restraint which almost amounted to *gêne;* while in that of the former I feel as perfectly at my ease as if we were old acquaintances. And yet I should like to have a husband whose dignity repelled familiarity from all but me: not such a one as that ceremonious lord of whom we read, who, when his young wife embraced him, told her that his former countess, though a Howard, *never* took such a liberty.

Our host has invited Lord Annandale to spend two or three days here; an invitation which he accepted with evident pleasure, and not without insinuating to me that I was the magnet which attracted him to Howard Castle. I am not sorry to have this place enlivened by the presence of a beau; for to confess the truth, the sententious conversation of Lord Howard, and the admiring assents of papa and mamma, are more instructive than amusing. I wish you were here—a selfish wish, you will say—as I have mentioned the *tristesse* of this *séjour;* but, I believe we are always most disposed to desire the presence of our friends, when we most require the exhilaration it inspires.

Your affectionate

AUGUSTA VERNON.

LORD ANNANDALE TO THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM.

MY DEAR NOTTINGHAM:—Here, I am in the feudal chateau of the Howards! the last place where I expected to find myself; and to which I have been attracted by the beautiful daughter of Lord Vernon, who, with her father and mother, are staying here on a visit. I met them at Lord Seymour's, when at dinner, two days ago, and Lord Howard asked me to come and pass a short time with him; an invitation I should assuredly not have accepted, had not the bright eyes of the fair Lady Augusta appeared to sparkle with complacency when it was made. You can fancy nothing half so brilliant, so beautiful, and so joyous, as this same Lady Augusta. She resembles nothing earthly, that I have seen, or unearthly that I have imagined, except it be the *beau idéal* of a Hebe. The most luxuriant tresses, of the fairest and most silken texture, eyes blue and radiant as the heavens, cheeks of rose, and lips of carnation, and a skin white and polished as—what shall I say? not marble, for that is hard—not snow, for that is cold—not satin, for that sounds like a man-milliner comparison—like nothing, that I ever saw before, or, I verily believe, shall see again, except in her. Then her figure! by Jove it is matchless! All the elasticity and bounding animation of the child, with all the rounded beauty of contour of the woman. Arms that might serve as models to the sculptor; hands that look as if only formed to play with flowers; and feet that seem almost too small to bear the beautiful figure, in which she excels all other women. No, my dear Nottingham, even after this description, you can no more form an idea of Lady Augusta Vernon, that I could have believed that such transcendant loveliness existed, until I had seen her. She is a perfect child in manner and in mind, and a little of a spoilt one too, I should imagine, from a certain half pouting, half laughing look, with which I saw her resist some interference of her father, relative to a horse that he thought too spirited

for her to ride. You should have seen the *air mutin* with which she maintained that she could perfectly master it; and yet, it was the arch vivacity of a playful child, and not the wilfulness of an obstinate woman, that she displayed in this little contest with papa. If ever again I should put on the chains of the saffron-robed god, this is just the creature to tempt me; and I should be the envy of all the men in London, could I present her there as Lady Annandale, before the roses of her cheeks have faded, or the brilliancy of her eyes been dimmed, by a London season, which is so destructive to the freshness of beauty. Envy me for being under the same roof with this divinity; I know you would, if you could see her!

Tout à vous,

ANNANDALE.

LADY AUGUSTA VERNON TO LADY DELAWARD.

DEAREST MARY:—Though we shall meet in a few days, I know you wish to be kept *au courant* of the state of health and spirits of your dear father. He is well, and as cheerful as can be expected, during the first week of separation from an only child—and such a child! Until I saw the effect your absence has produced, I was not aware how much of the happiness of a parent is rent from him, when, by the departure of his child from the paternal home, he is left to look at the vacant chair, the silent harp, and the untouched piano. How gloomy, then, appears the dwelling where no daughter's greeting meets him in the morning, and no fond good-night awaits him ere he seeks his pillow! This is all doubly experienced when a mother shares not the solitude of a father thus bereaved; and I have endeavored all in my power, although, I fear, inefficaciously, to supply your place to Lord Howard. I feel as if my affection for my own parents had increased, since I have witnessed how dear and essential a daughter is, to the happiness of the authors of her being.

We have had a visiter here for the last two days—Lord Annandale. He is agreeable and good-looking, and, in every respect, far superior to the men I have been accustomed to see. I can hardly believe that he has been a husband, and is a father; for, he appears almost as lively and unthinking as myself: and I have ever associated in my mind a pensiveness, if not a gravity, with my ideas of those who have filled those serious and responsible capacities. Lord Annandale has been giving me such glowing descriptions of London, and its pleasures, that I pine to be there, and to partake them. I wish I was seventeen, for, at that age I am to be presented; *mais hélas!* it wants eleven long months to that period. Lord Annandale treats me quite as if I had been *out*, and has told me a good deal of the London gossip: he has been a little ill-natured in laughing at the Ladies Seymour, in which I fear that I too readily joined; but there was no resisting the drollery of his mimickry. He says that they are as ambitious of conquest as ever Napoleon was, though not so successful; and, that, unlike him, they keep no *corps de réserve*, as they bring all their forces into the field, at once. Lord Annandale is just the sort of person that Caroline Montressor would like. *A propos* of her: I cannot, dear Mary, give her up, it would look so unkind and ill-natured. Indeed you do not render her justice; for, though I must admit she is given to *persiflage*, she is kind-hearted, and well-meaning, and very much attached to me. You talk so quietly of your happiness, that, though I cannot doubt, I do not feel disposed to envy it. But, you will scold me if I say more, and prove to me, as you always do, that *you* are right, and *I* wrong, though always your affectionate

AUGUSTA VERNON.

LADY DELAWARD TO LADY AUGUSTA VERNON.

Delaward Park.

CAN it be possible, that you, my dear Augusta, can join in the laughter of Lord Annandale against the Ladies Seymour? His ridiculing them to you, betrays that he had discovered in you a propensity to be pleased by his ill-natured raillery—a poor compliment to your heart. I know Lord Annandale, and think him vain, affected, and flippant; but, let me not, while censuring his malevolent propensity, merit a similar imputation, by commenting too severely on his faults. I would only impress upon your mind, that a man who indulges in satirical gossip is always a dangerous, although he may be an amusing companion. Nothing implies a light estimation of our sex more than the habit some men have of seeking to entertain us at the expense of our female acquaintances;

and, when we encourage their malice by our smiles, we justify their bad opinion. You say, that Lord Annandale's glowing description of London, and its pleasures, makes you wish to be there, and to partake them; and that you sigh for the completion of your seventeenth year, that you may enter into fashionable life. If I know your heart, I pronounce that disappointment must await you in that glittering circle where you anticipate only happiness; and where *pleasure*, though at a distance it may look like the unearthly guest, loses all resemblance when nearer approached.

If you are determined to persist in your correspondence with Miss Montressor, do, at least, make up your mind to reject her counsel, and shun the adoption of her false opinions. I dwell not on the evil consequences which an intimacy with her may produce, by alarming the good and prudent from seeking you. Her levity and indiscretion in avowing her principles—or want of principles, I should rather say—have driven from her many of her own sex, and impressed the other, with notions most prejudicial to a young woman. Serious as this consideration may be, I am more alarmed by the certain risk which your morals incur in an intimacy with her, than by the probable injury which it may entail upon your worldly prospects. Be on your guard, dearest Augusta; read none of the French novels she recommends; and, if you will not break with her, at least discourage her levity as much as you can. We expect you to dinner on Thursday: need I say how glad I shall be to see you again?

Your affectionate

MARY DELAWARD.

LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

LORD ANNANDALE is still here, dearest Caroline; and, were we not going to Delward Park to-morrow would probably continue here as long as we may do, or at least as long as his convenience permitted. Shall I, or shall I not confess, that he has declared himself my suitor, and that I, though somewhat loth, have listened to his prayer, and referred him to papa; who, however, and mamma, seemed more surprised than pleased at the avowal of his attachment to me. They pleaded, in opposition to the demand, my extreme youth and inexperience—my ignorance of the world—and their desire that I should not marry until I was at least eighteen. All their reasoning only served to increase the ardor of my suitor; who implored me with such zeal and passion, that I consented to tell my mother that *my* happiness depended on my union with him.

She, dear good soul—having shed a few tears at the declaration, that the happiness of her Augusta depended on any one save her, and papa, and having expressed some wonder that, on so short an acquaintance, a serious attachment *could* be formed, and some doubts that I could be happy away from parents who adored me—sought papa, to tell him what I desired he should know. No sooner had she left the room, than I wished to recal her. Her last observation had touched a chord in my heart that vibrated painfully; and I asked myself, while tears streamed down my cheeks, whether, indeed I could be happy away from the dear, the indulgent parents, whom I was willing to abandon for a man unknown to me a few weeks ago? I felt tempted to follow her to my father's room and to adopt their rejection of Lord Annandale, or, at least to retard my acceptance of him for a year or two: but shame, and a dread of the imputation of giddiness and vacillation, to which so rapid a change in my feelings might have given rise, checked the impulse; and I remained weeping in my room, frightened at the dilemma into which my own weakness had reduced me, and waiting with dread, the result of that intercession on the part of mamma, for which only, a few minutes before, I had warmly pleaded.

How strange is the human heart! or, at least, that specimen of it which is now throbbing in my breast. While listening to Lord Annandale's passionate entreaties to be his, I fancied that he was dear to me—nay, almost believed my own assertion, that my happiness depended on a union with him; yet now, that my parents have yielded to his solicitations, supposing that this concession was necessary to the peace of their child, I feel as if he had become indifferent to me, and I wonder how I could ever have imagined that I loved him.

When subsequently he came to me, all rapture at the consent of my father, and thanked me for having obtained it, I experienced an instinctive desire to tell him the state of my feelings: but shame again withheld me, joined to a latent doubt of the possibility of another change in my sentiments; consequently, I let him pour out his impassioned vows of eternal affection and gratitude, while I coldly suffered,

instead of participating his happiness. Surely, I do not, cannot love this man, or I could not feel thus coldly on such an occasion: yet, he is handsome and agreeable, and, a few hours ago, I thought him much more than this. Counsel me, dearest Caroline; tell me if there is yet time to avow to my parents the real state of my inclinations, and to be equally candid with Lord Annandale. It seems to me to be cruel to let him continue in the erroneous belief that I love him, when the illusion has vanished from my own mind; and yet how miserable will such an avowal render him, adoring me as he does!

No, I have not courage to inflict unhappiness on another: let me rather bear it myself, since to my own levity, and want of self knowledge, it is due. I am now sensible that I have been dazzled and flattered by this, the first passion I have inspired, and that I have mistaken the transient gratitude occasioned by gratified vanity, for a more fervent sentiment. Lord Annandale has told me, that he fears Lady Delaward may prejudice me against him; and that this apprehension was one of the reasons that urged him to press his suit before I had again seen her. He attempted to pass some ill natured pleasantries on her prudery and old fashioned formality of manners; said that she disliked every one who was not as straightlaced as herself; but I checked his raillery, as I cannot bear to hear Lady Delaward spoken ill of by those who judge her only from a cold exterior. Tomorrow, we set out to Delaward Park, and Lord Annandale goes to his seat in Gloucesterhire. I feel a sense of relief at our separation; for he is so overjoyed and happy, that my calmness, if not gravity, forms a contrast not pleasant to me, and not, I should think, likely to be gratifying to him. If all women leave their accepted lovers with as little regret as I have experienced in separating from mine, why, then, I envy neither the lover, nor the loved.

Your affectionate

AUGUSTA VERNON.

LORD ANNANDALE TO THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM.

CONGRATULATE me, my dear Nottingham, for I am the happiest dog alive this day. You will be ready to exclaim with the Lord C., on a similar occasion, some fifty years ago, "Every dog has his day;" but I will forgive you the assertion, for I am too happy, too proud, to cavil with any thing at present.

"Well, well," I fancy I hear you ask, "what does all this joy mean? Is there a change of ministry, and is he premier? or has his horse won at Newmarket? Has his worst enemy lost half his fortune at Crockford's, and has *he* gained it? or, has he got the twenty thousand prize in the lottery?"

No, *mon cher!* none of these auspicious events have occurred; but I have drawn a prize in the lottery of wedlock, that has rendered me more happy than if each and all of them had happened. I have proposed for, and been accepted by, the most beautiful and fascinating of her sex, who has just enough of the angel in her composition to elevate her above all other women; and just enough of the woman to make a lover go mad, if she chooses to take it into her head to torment him. Papa and mamma are the most primitively good persons on earth, knowing little of our world, and scarcely dreaming that vice or wickedness exists. They idolise their daughter, as well they may, and were unwilling to consent to her marrying for two years to come, But, I won on Lady Augusta's pity, by displaying the love I *felt* and the despair I did *not* feel: for *entre nous*, I was sure of talking her over to take my side of the question, by giving her a few insinuations that papa and mamma were treating her as a child. This suggestion, aided by my vehement protestations of affection and grief soon settled the affair; and induced her to tell mamma that *her* happiness depended upon our union. You know that I had determined on never again entering the pale of matrimony; a resolution that I should have faithfully kept, had I only seen the belles of Almack's gallopading, waltzing or quadrilling, for—husbands; or cantering in the Park, to catch some Nimrod. No; your London beauty, with pale cheeks languid eyes and uncountable accomplishments, would not have made me captive: but this creature—as fresh in mind as in person, full of health, and hope and joy—there *was* no resisting. I shall be disappointed if she do not produce an amazing sensation in the fashionable world. Her beauty is so brilliant, that it must command universal homage; and her *naïveté* has nothing rustic in it. She has been so much accustomed to be admired, nay, worshipped by those around her, that she is more likely to receive the general ad-

miration of our circle as her right, than as a subject for gratitude. And yet there is nothing insolent in her pretensions; a consciousness of beauty and power may well be pardoned in a creature fair enough to warm the frozen heart of a Stoic, and lively enough to keep that heart in perpetual agitation.

To-morrow, *ma belle fiancée*, and her papa and mamma, leave this place, with Lord Howard, for Delaward Park. I know I am no favorite with the Delawards, who are very formal, stuck-up people; and who, were I not an *accepted* lover, might be very likely to influence Lady Augusta, over whom Lady Delaward has long exercised an empire founded on affection. I feared this empire, and endeavored, once or twice, to ridicule Lady Delaward, to my *future;* but, she resented the attempt most warmly, and, therefore, I have ever since avoided the subject.

I return to Gloucestershire to-morrow, and shall be in town in a few days, to put all *en train* with the lawyers, who now-a-days make as many difficulties in letting a man marry, as they formerly did in unmarrying him; consequently, a modern marriage-settlement seems more like an agreement drawn up between two hostile parties, mutually apprehensive of fraud, than of two loving persons going to be made one. The Scotch term of married *against*, instead of *to*, has always struck me as peculiarly felicitous. But here am I *plaisantant* respecting that state into which I am so anxious to enter! perhaps on the principle of anticipating the *mauvaises plaisanteries* of my friends. Adieu, *au revoir*, as I conclude you will be in town by the time I arrive there.

Tout à vous,

ANNANDALE.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LADY A. VERNON.

AND so, *ma chère* Augusta, you have accepted Lord Annandale! This surprises me not, neither does it displease; but, I confess, your sentimental scruples as to not liking him made me laugh, though they vexed me a little too. How much have you to learn, *ma bonne!* You are fortunate in having secured a *bon parti* without passing through the tiresome ceremony of *coming out;* and being exhibited through a whole season, perhaps *two*, to those disposed to take unto themselves a wife. A demoiselle, however charming, is always placed in a *fausse position* under such circumstances, even in England, where unmarried women have so much more liberty than in other countries; I congratulate you, therefore, on having escaped that ordeal of patience, being "*a belle* of a season," and entering the fashionable world as a married woman; giving the *ton* to, not taking it from others.

I have never seen a group of our young *débutantes*, at their first presentation at court, without being reminded of the horses, mules, and asses, in Italy, decked in plumes and tinsel, on the *fête* of St. Anthony, and led to be blessed by that patron of animals, preparatory to their exhibition for sale; while those who intend to purchase, flock round to examine their points and paces. You have escaped all this humiliation; and, instead of approaching royality as a blushing novice, to obtain a *lascia passare* for fashionable life, you enter the court, with a matron's tiara of diamonds encircling your brow, and the passport of beauty, rank, and fashion, signed by Hymen's coronet. And with all this, and other "appliances to boot," you hesitate; and think, pretty innocent! that, because you do not love him who is to bestow, you ought to decline them! This is really being romantic *en veritél* Lady Delaward herself, your Minerva, could not betray a more absolute and fantastic delicacy. Lord Annandale is *un homme du monde;* amusing, and willing to be amused; with no inconsiderable portion of vanity, and with a mind that refers all his own actions and those of others to the opinion of that society whose suffrages alone he seeks and values. How he would laugh at your romantic scruples, were you, in the simplicity of your heart, to confide them to him! Be assured, *ma chère*, that it is by no means necessary that love should be the prelude of matrimony. *Au contraire*, to those who intend, as sensible persons ought, to live in the world and do as others do, this selfish passion would be the greatest hinderance to comfort in a *ménage* conducted on the principles of those formed in fashionable life. Were you "in love," as this calamity is styled, with Lord Annandale, *you* would find the frequent absences imposed by business or pleasure on all men, a constant and irritating source of chagrin; and *he* would find your murmurs or grave looks, on such occasions, any thing but agreeable. That he should *admire* you greatly is very desirable, because it will ensure your empire over him, without sub-

jecting you to the *ennuyeuses* restrictions, and *exigeances*, which husbands who are in love with their wives impose. The more *he* admires you, the more will he be gratified by the admiration you excite in others: hence, you may count on more liberty, and consequently on more pleasure, than fall to the lot of those women who conjugate the verb to *love* with their husbands; a connubial process which, commencing with, *I* love, *thou* lovest, soon becomes enlivened by *he* loves, and, better still, *they* love; until all terminates in the past tense we *have* loved. Before, however, this fatal stage of the conjugation arrives, how many unhappy hours, and lowering clouds, must the matrimonial horizon have known! Yours will be exempt from all such; and your happiness will afford pleasure to no one more truly than to your

CAROLINE.

LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

Delaward Park.

IT is strange, dearest Caroline, but nevertheless true, that your worldly wisdom is much less congenial to my feelings, than are the pure, and, as you call them, severe principles of Lady Delaward. There is something so heartless, so calculating, in your system, that I turn from it with dislike; and your letter which was forwarded to me here, has vexed and disappointed me. You should have seen the meeting of Lady Delaward and her father, and the affectionate and respectful attention Lord Delaward pays him, and then you would not, *could* not, depreciate the power of love; for every courtesy to the parent indicated the warm attachment which the husband bore to the daughter. You should have seen, Caroline, the glances of deep, but silent tenderness, with which Lady Delaward repays her lord for each and all of these acts of attention; and even *you* must have become sensible of the inestimable value of that sentiment which produces such effects. It is now that Lord Howard is repaid for all the chagrin he felt at his daughter's departure from his roof. In witnessing the happiness of *her* well-ordered home, he ceases to remember that *his* has become lonely; and the deep, the devoted attachment of her husband, manifested in a thousand daily proofs, consoles him for having yielded her to him.

I like Lord Delaward more every hour. There is a kindness and cordiality in his manner towards those he considers his friends, that receives additional value from his stately courtesy to mere acquaintances. It may be only fancy, but I sometimes think that there is something of pity mingled in the kindness he evinces towards me; Lady Delaward, also, often looks at me with a pensive gaze, as if she augured ill of the engagement I have formed. She asked me whether it was irrevocable, and whether I loved Lord Annandale? I was on the point of throwing myself into her arms, and avowing all my feelings; when the recollection, that my poor mother had told her that it was *I* who had vanquished hers and my father's objections, sealed my lips, until I had acquired sufficient firmness to answer in the affirmative, while my heart rebelled against the falsehood of the assertion. Since then, she has, evidently, been very guarded in communicating to me her opinion of Lord Annandale; and from this conversation I date the inexplicable pity which seems to pervade her and Lord Delaward's feeling towards me. And yet there are moments when I ask myself, whether, in thus uniting myself to a man I do not love, I am not rendering myself an object of pity?

Yesterday, we drove through the beautiful park here; and Lady Delaward stopped at a "cottage of *gentility*," which, though not displaying a "double coach-house," was nevertheless, by the neatness, nay, elegance, of its structure, well entitled to that appellation.

"I must introduce you to a very valued friend of my husband's," said she to my mother, as we were marshalled through a light and cheerful little vestibule, by a rural Hebe, in the shape of a handmaiden, to one of the prettiest and most comfortable small libraries it has ever been my good fortune to enter.

"I have brought you my dear friends, Mrs. Ord," said Lady Delaward, presenting us to one of the most ladylike women imaginable; who, though past the meridian of life, still possessed considerable remains of beauty. By her were seated two lovely girls, of seventeen and eighteen, one drawing, and the other embroidering, whose beaming eyes sparkled with pleasure at seeing Lady Delaward. The ordinary salutation over, my mother, after gazing attentively at Mrs. Ord, who also looked

at her, rose from her seat, and, approaching her, demanded whether she did not recognise the friend of her early youth, Elizabeth De Vere?

Scarcely had the question been uttered, when the friends, for such they had been, though long years had separated them, and different destinies had led to an ignorance of each other's fate, were, with tears in their eyes, embracing, and mutually presenting their children. You know the warmth of my dear mother's feelings; and they were now greatly excited by this unexpected meeting with one for whom she had formerly entertained a strong attachment. Lady Delaward, who is all kindness, was scarcely less delighted than were the friends, who having evidently much to say to each other, she proposed a ramble in the garden; to which the lovely daughters of Mrs. Ord conducted us.

My mother told me last night, that Mrs. Ord had been the daughter of the Bishop of St. Asaph, one of the nearest neighbors of her father. Soon after the death of the bishop, who held his see during too short a period to have been enabled to make much provision for his daughter, she left the neighborhood to reside with her aunt. At this time, my mother, having accompanied my grandfather to Italy, for the recovery of his health, in a rambling life, lost sight of her young friend; who, it appears, subsequently to her father's death, bestowed her hand on the Rector of Delaward, who had been the tutor, and continued, while he lived, the dear friend, of Lord Delaward. The worthy rector closed a life of virtuous usefulness three years ago, leaving his excellent wife and two daughters, with a son at college, but scantily provided with the gifts of fortune. The rectory becoming the residence of the present incumbent, Lord Delaward arranged the charming cottage we saw for the widow of his friend; and has settled a comfortable annuity on her for life.

All this Mrs. Ord told my mother, with tears of gratitude; interspersing the narrative with anecdotes of the rare generosity and untiring goodness of her benefactor, whose strength of mind, as she justly said, is only equalled by his kindness of heart. Mrs. Ord and her daughters have already learned to love Lady Delaward, who feels towards them as if they were the friends of her youth, because they have stood in that relation to her husband.

No, dear Caroline! all that I see here proves to me that virtue and goodness are not, as you would fain persuade me, obsolete prejudices, or chimeras of a romantic brain. All around me breathes of content and peace, and I seem to exist in a purer atmosphere. The excellent qualities of my dear father and mother appear to proceed as much from a happy temperament as from a sense of duty. Theirs is the indulgent virtue that "rather loves to praise, than blame;" nay, I doubt whether they *could* blame—so gentle, so loving, is their nature. They would pity and weep over the errors they wanted courage to correct; while others would ward them off by a more steady and severe discipline. The Delawards will be the guardian angels of their children, watching each incipient approach of error, and erasing every embryo of vice; while my dear parents would be the pitying angels, that try, like the recording angel of Sterne, to blot out with tears the spots they could not prevent.

I wish you were here, Caroline; this atmosphere of goodness would heal every worldly wound that makes your feelings rankle, and you would no longer be a sceptic in the salutary power of virtue. Never be one in the sincerity of the affection of your

AUGUSTA.

LORD ANNANDALE TO THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM.

I FIND myself, my dear Nottingham, in a curious dilemma! The Comtesse Hohenlinden, with whom, as you know, I last season formed a *liaison*, has heard of my approaching marriage, and chooses to think herself exceedingly ill used. Now this is too preposterous—*mais quoi faire?* She has great influence in a certain clique, which is precisely that clique with which I most desire to stand well; and *Sa Seigneurie* is apt to be any thing but patient whenever any of her knights turn recreant to her charms, which (*entre nous soit dit*) are fast falling into the sear and yellow leaf—*ràison de plus*, as you will say, for resenting any slight offered to their names. We know how *méchante* she can be; and, I confess, I cannot anticipate with any degree of placidity "the slings and arrows of outrageous" ridicule she will let fly at my devoted head, if I do not find means to appease her.

I have thought of a mode of accomplishing this desirable point, and yet without sacrificing either my love for Lady Augusta or my interest with the comtesse. I shall

persuade *Sa Seigneurie* that my marriage is an affair *d'intérêt de convenance, de tout ce qu'elle voudra, enfin;* and that my affection is hers, and hers alone. The circumstance of Lady Augusta being an heiress will give a color to this protestation, and the vanity of *la comtesse* will make her yield a ready credence to it. Do you not think my plan an excellent one? I have not been a diplomatist so long, without having acquired the art of temporising with contending interests; and I flatter myself I shall manage the affair *à merveille.*

I understand that Wilmot is *dished*, and his effects about to be served up to his hungry creditors.—I want you to tell Joe Anderson to buy his carriage-horses for me; and if his wife's diamonds are to be sold, as I conclude they will be, send your factotum to bid them for me. I will go as high as six thousand for them.

I wish you would call at Barker's, to see how the carriages I ordered are going on. Yours ever,

ANNANDALE.

P. S.—Are the reports I have heard true, as to Wilmot having detected *madame son épouse* in a *liaison* with his friend Neville? I hope not; for, as according to the old proverb, in love as well as in sin, *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*, I might be brought into a disagreeable scrape; for Neville knows that I was his predecessor in the good graces of Madame, and to save his purse, would be quite capable of stating that fact; and though, judging by myself, *on ne revient pas toujours à ses premiers amours* husbands are rather prone to this old-fashioned system, and make the past flame pay for the present. They manage these things better in France, *n'est-ce pas?*

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LADY A. VERNON.

You really grow incorrigible, *ma chère* Augusta. Was there ever any thing half so uncharitable as your wish of seeing me *plantée* at Delaward Park, in what *you* style an atmosphere of goodness, but which *I* more correctly name an atmosphere of dulness? I should die under the infliction.

And so, the modern Grandisons pity you, forsooth! And you, *pauvre petite*, sometimes think it is a lamentable affair to marry a man one is not in love with! It certainly is a melancholy fate to be wedded to a well-looking, well-bred, well-situated man of rank, with just talents enough to render him too useful to be left out of a cabinet, and just wisdom enough not to commit himself when in it; with fortune enough to preveut your ever being *gênée*, and fashion enough to set the seal on yours. And this, you *sometimes* think a position to be pitied! *Fi-donc!* tell it not in Ascalon, publish it not in Gath.

What a charming little romance one might make out of your sentimental episode of "The Tutor's Wife, or Virtue Rewarded!" I have already sketched out the plan; but the *dénoûment* would, I think, be different from what you would imagine. I would make your puritanical Lord Delaward's kindness the result of a *tendresse* for one of Mrs. Ord's fair daughters, instead of a friendship for his *ci-devant* tutor, her defunct spouse; Mademoiselle seduced; Lady Delaward *au désespoir;* Mrs. Ord, do. do.; and the wicked lord looking as foolish as Joseph Surface, when Lady Teazle was detected behind the screen. Shall I send this plot to George Sand? Only fancy what passionate declamations it would originate in the prolific brain of the author of "Jacques!" George Sand would probably make Lady Delaward commit suicide, to leave her lord at liberty to atone for his wrongs to mademoiselle; and mademoiselle, not to be outdone in generosity, would follow her disinterested example: Monsieur Milord would go mad—in decency he could do no less: and Mrs. Ord and her remaining daughter would erect a white marble cenotaph to the memory of "One too good for life," meaning the betrayed; on the urn of which they would daily place bouquets of *pensées*, and garlands of *immortelles.*

Is not this very French, and very sentimental? and are you not very much obliged to me for enlivening your "atmosphere of goodness" with this little sketch *à la Française?* *Addio, cara!* love me as I am, and do not be so *méchante* as to abandon your old friend

CAROLINE.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO LORD ANNANDALE.

MY DEAR ANNANDALE:—I have secured the horses for you, and the diamonds likewise. I do not approve your plan of conciliating the comtesse by a falsehood; for, I know she is capable of telling all her friends that you only marry an heiress be-

cause you are ruined, and that you are still more her slave than ever. Even without the sanction of your avowal of continued *tendresse*, *sa seigneurie* has so lively an imagination, that this, and much more, she would be capable of propagating, as a salve to her mortified vanity. Such a story coming to the knowledge of your bride, (and how many spiteful, envious persons might convey the tale in an anonymous epistle!) would be very injurious to your domestic peace. You would not, I presume, present your young and pure wife to *la comtesse* and her *clique;* that is, you would only let them meet at those *re-unions* of fashion at certain houses, when hundreds are congregated together, much as at the Zoological Gardens, or Vauxhall, and where a bow or courtesy, *en passant*, is all that is required. I am no male prude, Heaven knows; but I do revolt at seeing men suffer their wives to live on terms of familiarity with women of whose bad conduct they can entertain no doubt. Look, for instance, at Lattimer and Ribblesworth allowing their wives to associate intimately with women whose *liaisons* have been neither few nor apocryphal: such conduct is indelicate and disgusting. But, to return to your *comtesse:* she is at this moment *entiché* with young Dormer, and shows herself up with him, *sans ménagement*. Can you not act the jealous, accuse her of infidelity, and so break with her for ever? This measure will save you from the disagreeable dilemma of excluding her from your wife's circles; to which let me advise you to admit none but women who are, as Cæsar said his wife should be, not only pure, but unsuspected. I think I hear you, with a Mephistophiles' smile on your lips, ask where such are to be found? But I aver we have still many, very many, though they are not to be discovered in the circle in which you must live; a fact which only *mauvais sujets*, like yourself, doubt.

Yours ever,
NOTTINGHAM.

LORD DELAWARD TO LADY DELAWARD.

Grosvenor Square.

I HAVE thought of you, my dear Mary, ever since I left our happy home. It requires no slight exertion of volition to tear myself from you; and this, our first separation, has taught me more than I had previously known—if that be possible—the happiness your presence can bestow. I miss you, I want your society, every moment; and I often ask myself the question, how I have lived before I became acquainted with you?

My business here shall be expedited as much as possible. I have ordered your suite of rooms to be newly furnished, and selected the colors I know you like. I have had a private staircase erected, to communicate with a suite above, which, I trust in God, will not be long tenantless; and a thousand feelings, all novel and delightful, have passed through my mind in making these arrangements.

Yesterday, I met Lord Riversford at dinner, at my club; and he, not knowing our intimacy with the Vernons, announced to me, as news, the approaching marriage of Lady Augusta with Lord Annandale.

"He marries her wholly for her fortune," said Riversford, "which is odd, as we always considered him sufficiently rich not to be compelled to marry for money."

I replied, that the extreme beauty of Lady Augusta must always redeem him from the suspicion of interested motives in selecting her, even though she is an heiress.

"You surprise me!" said Riversford, "for *la Comtesse* Hohenlinden read to several of us, Annandale's sentimental epistle; in which he declared his unabated devotion to *her*, and alluded to his marriage, as an affair of *necessity*, not *choice*. Though the letter did not positively say that the *fiancée* was plain, the whole tenor of it left that impression on our minds; and *sa seigneurie* confirmed it, by asserting, that *la jeune personne est laide à faire peur*, and by pitying *ce pauvre Annandale.*"

I find that Annandale has been a long time known to be a friend, and something more to the *comtesse;* and if, as his letter to her implies, he intends to continue his intimacy with her, I foresee much unhappiness, nay more, danger, to your beautiful, but giddy friend. With Lady Augusta's extreme youth and loveliness, her great susceptibility and inexperience, and with a husband whose over-weening vanity, and want of fixed moral principles, render him a most unfit guide for her through the labyrinth of fashionable follies, I tremble for her, in the position which she seems likely to occupy. All that I hear of Annandale renders me more than ever indisposed to this marriage. Would to Heaven there were any means of averting it! Lady Augusta is, as you, my beloved Mary, told me before I knew her, a being full of generous feelings and

fine sympathies with all that is good and noble; but easily excited, with more imagination than reason—which at her age is natural—and somewhat spoiled by the injudicious indulgence of her parents. She is a creature who, under the guidance of an honest and wise man, who loved her, and whom she loved, might be led to attain as much virtue as ever dignifies human intelligence; but, in the hands of a weak or unprincipled one, may become a source of misery to herself, and to those who are attached to her.

It makes me gloomy to think of what her lot may be; and *I*—who know the inestimable happiness of wedded life, when founded on affection, and cemented by similarity of taste, and congeniality of sentiment—pity, with all my heart, this charming young woman, who is about to form ties, that I fear, will never be rendered holy or indissoluble by any of the causes I have mentioned. Endeavor, my dear Mary, to impress on her reason, without alarming her innocence, the urgent necessity of a dignified reserve in her manners; and a scrupulous avoidance of all persons of her own sex, whatever may be their rank or other advantages, whose reputations are tarnished. Nothing so much tends to depreciate the respect that virtue ought to inspire, and to lessen the disgust of vice, as seeing those whose own career is irreproachable, live on habits of intimacy with women of whose errors they cannot entertain a doubt. Injurious as are the examples of bad conduct, the impunity which too frequently attends the perpetration is still more fatally pernicious. It is the privilege to do wrong, tacitly yielded to some individuals, in a social system so partial and capricious as ours, that breaks down the barriers of decorum and morality; for, many a young and thoughtless woman has been led to ruin, by daily witnessing to what an extent imprudence and impropriety may safely be carried, when the pure and impure are received in the same circles, and on the same terms.

But, to quit this painful subject for one far more agreeable. I have been thinking, my sweet wife, that, could we induce your good father to take up his abode with us, we should all be the happier. *You* would not then have the apprehension of his loneliness, nor *he* the painful consciousness of having lost you. The more I experience the blessing of your presence, the more am I sensible how deeply he must regret separation from you. He would feel, in living with us, and sharing our domestic felicity, that, instead of losing a daughter, he had found a son; and I should have the delight of knowing, that, in studying his happiness, I was securing yours. In three days, with the blessing of God, I shall be with you. May good angels guard my love, prays her devoted

DELAWARD.

LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

INDEED, Caroline, your last letter shocked me; it seemed like sacrilege to read it beneath this roof, where every thing breathes of purity and peace. How little you know Lord Delaward, when you can, even in imagination, make him the hero of such a tale! When I have seen the dignified and exemplary Mrs. Ord, and her lovely and virtuous daughters, I have felt as if I had sinnnd against them in reading, and that from the hand of a friend, a story founded on the supposed guilt of one of those sweet girls. It is this levity this ridicule of all that is good and respectable, that makes you incur the censure of those who are not, like me, prone to forgive it, in the consideration of your better qualities. And yet, Caroline, there are moments when I ask myself whether I ought to continue a correspondence in which sentiments are often expressed, and principles avowed, which are in total variance with all that I have ever been taught to believe praise-worthy. If you cannot think and feel as I do, learn, at least, to respect my feelings, and do not, by revolting them, prevent my continuing your affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LADY A. VERNON.

You do with me as you will, *ma très chère; mais, en grace*, send me no more scolding letters, and I, *en revanche*, will try not to deserve them, by believing every one you know to be as good, proper, and wise, as yourself. Are you not satisfied, now? I shall be much mortified, if, after this act of contrition, you do not invite me to be your bridesmaid. Weddings bring thoughts of matrimony into people's heads, it is said, who had not, before, an idea on the subject; and who knows, if, among the chosen few selected to witness your nuptials, some lord of the creation

may not, from thinking of the agreeable position of the bride, be led to pity the *disagreeable* one of the bridesmaid? which I hold to be one of the most lamentable to which poor spinsters are exposed. Fancy unhappy me, decked in virgin white, with downcast lids—a *figure de circonstance* which is, I believe, *d'usage* on such occasions—wishing, all the time, that "God had made *me* such a man;" and that *I* was the proprietor of a certain baronial chateau in the north, a park in the south, a mansion in the west end of London, and a box at the opera; as well as a certain other and still more precious box, bound in brass and of large dimensions, similar to one whose sparkling contents had excited my envy the day before.

All these virgin wishes would naturally produce a pensive expression of countenance, which would as naturally be attributed to an amiable disposition, and a deep conviction of the serious duties which marriage imposes. A woman that so properly feels this conviction must, of course, be likely to make a good wife; and the man, with a free hand, an empty heart, and a full purse, who sees a poor bridesmaid wiping her eyes, as the chariot-and-four, with postillions with white favors, whisks off from her sight the blushing bride and exulting bridegroom, and does not speak comfort to her, *must* be a brute. Pity is, they say, akin to love; the pity once excited, (and what so likely to call it forth as such a scene as I have described?) who knows what may follow? and your poor friend may, from a weeping bridesmaid, be transformed, in due time, into a simpering bride. Do not mar the possibility of such a happy event, by not bidding to your nuptials your *amie dévouée*,

CAROLINE.

LORD ANNANDALE TO THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM.

IF your letter of advice had reached me in time, my dear Nottingham, I should have followed it; but when did advice ever come in time? Advice is like experience; it always comes when it is too late for use. My letter to *sa seigneurie* was despatched twice twenty-fours before yours arrived. She has accepted the salve I offered to her wounded vanity; and has written to me, saying that, in pity to my *malheur* she will take Lady Annandale under her protection. and render her *a la mode*. I could have well dispensed with this excessive generosity on her part. *Mais quoi faire?* Were I to exclude her from Lady Annandale's circle, she would become an active enemy; and I know the extent of her talents for *tracasserie* too well, to expose myself to their indefatigable activity.

I hope much from the great beauty of Lady Augusta for the *comtesse* will hardly seek to exhibit her *fanés* charms near the youthful bloom of Lady Annandale—a bloom near which all other women look *fade*. For my part, I shall affect to think my wife *rien de remarquable* in the way of good looks; an insensibility which this vain woman will attribute to my devotion to her; and it will console her vanity, which I know to be as excessive as it is sensitive, to believe that there is one man in London who thinks her more irresistible than her beautiful rival; and that that man is her rival's liege-lord.

The settlements are drawn, and on the 14th all will be in readiness for the nuptial ceremony. Lord and Lady Vernon have insisted that it shall be performed, with primitive simplicity, in their village church; when, probably, the rector who christened *la belle* Augusta—and her papa, for aught I know—will read me a homily on the duties of husbands, similar to one I heard on a like occasion some three years ago. Heigh-ho! how old it makes one feel, to recall to memory such a remarkable epoch in a man's life as a marriage! The late Lady Annandale was a very beautiful and amiable woman; *mais*, not content with being good herself, she would fain have rendered every one else equally excellent; and, most of all, her unworthy lord. Poor dear soul! how pale and sorrowful she used to look, when I gave utterance to any of my opinions on religious subjects, or laughed at the peccadilloes of people of fashion! She tried to reclaim me, as she called it; but she "did her spiriting gently," and an unkind or harsh word I never heard from her lips, nor one implying a reproach, unless it might be the last, when she said to me, "We have been too much separated on earth, my dear husband, by a want of similarity of sentiments: let us not, with my last breath I pray you be divided in a future state, by a want of religion, and a strict performance of all it enjoins."

Poor Mary! no husband who fell short of the virtues of a Wilberforce would have satisfied her; and I, Heaven knows, was the last man on earth to aspire to such perfection. Well, to leave the gloomy

past, and return to the cheerful future. On the 14th, I am to be made a happy man; and I want you, my dear Nottingham, to come and see the ceremony performed. Lord and Lady Vernon will expect you on the 12th, so do not disappoint *votre ami*,

ANNANDALE.

LADY A. VERNON TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

You are a sad madcap, my dear Caroline; and, were I to judge you by what you write, I should consider you to be as unfeeling as you are lively. You shall be present at a certain solemn ceremony which takes place on the 14th; and the nearer it approaches, the more solemn it appears to me. I am persuaded that, had I paid my long visit to Delaward Park before I had accepted Lord Annandale, I never should have acted thus; and even now I shrink, with secret repugnance, from the fulfilment of the engagement I have so unthinkingly contracted. The letters I have received from Lord Annandale have influenced my feelings quite as much as the various conversations on the subject of marriage, and morals, which I have had with Lady Delaward. He writes as only a man of pleasure would write to a woman who had as much levity and as little sentiment as himself. Notwithstanding his letters breathe of passion, it is not the sort of passion I wish to inspire; and, though I am no casuist, there seems to me to be an immeasurable distance between passion and love. The first may be entertained without respect for the object, but the second and nobler sentiment must be based on it. Lady Delaward has inspired love; and I (but why compare my unworthy self with one so infinitely superior?) have only engendered a *feeling* that the least estimable of my sex have often excited. And yet, may it not be, that Lord Annandale is incapable of entertaining love? This belief is, at least, more soothing to my *amour propre* than my previous supposition, and, therefore, I will indulge it.

The romance *à la George Sand*, that you composed on the subject of the amiable family of Mrs. Ord, falls to the ground; for, instead of a melancholy tale of error, her eldest and handsomest daughter is soon to be united to Mr. Neville, the worthy rector of Delaward; consequently she will return to the home of her infancy, as its happy mistress. My dear father has determined to give young Ord the next presentation of a living, which, he expects, will soon revert to him—the prospect of which has diffused joy through the whole family.

Lord Delaward has been absent a week on business; and you should have witnessed the gloom and void, his absence spread over the whole circle here, and the cheerfulness his return caused, to feel how wholly the happiness of a family depends on the master. You should have seen the efforts, not always successful, made by Lady Delaward, to conceal her regret at his departure, her pensiveness during his absence, and her joy-beaming eyes at his return, to be sensible of the power of affection and the happiness it can confer. But *you* will, perhaps, mock what appears to me so sacred; and such mockery I consider as little short of profanation. Never had I formed a notion of the comforts of a well-ordered home until my visit here; for mine, though abounding in all the luxuries of life, wants the animating spirit that only a young master and mistress can diffuse. The regularity at Vernon Hall appeared monotonous to me: and the oft-beginning, never-ending, visitations of our country neighbors served only to render it more tedious. I had learned to dread the thrice-told tales of the deaf and old Lady Hamlyn, and the pointless *bon-mots* of her gouty lord. Lord and Lady Dorington's old news half set me to sleep; from which happy state I was only awakened by their mutual contradiction of, "Indeed, my Lord Dorington, it was not so;" and, "You will permit me to know better, Lady Dorington." Then, the short-sightedness of our old rector, who never could distinguish me from my mother, the taciturnity of his curate, the loquacity of our doctor, and the vulgarity of his fat wife, did not serve to enliven the periodical dinners at which these worthies graced the board of my paternal home.

Here, one day of every month is set apart for a grand dinner, given to all the nobility and gentry in the neighborhood, who are conciliated by a dignified hospitality; but, not encouraged to that indiscriminate familiarity which, to the total interruption of all the rational occupations of the luckless owners, converts so many country-houses into inns. The high character Lord Delaward justly bears in his county led all his neighbors to form a favorable estimate of his wife, before they could judge from experience how far she was entitled to it. This is one of the

many benefits arising from a high character: it enables him who possesses it to shed a lustre on all that immediately appertains to him; and happy, thrice happy is she, who derives honor from him who has chosen her for his companion through life. Heigh-ho! will such be my lot? Perhaps I the more desire it, because I feel that my giddiness and inexperience require the mantle of a husband's superiority to cover them, and protect me from their effects.

We leave this the day after to-morrow; and with deep regret shall I quit a spot where I have learned to respect what I have hitherto been more disposed to scoff at—the scrupulous discharge of duties; a spot where I have been taught to think better of others, and more modestly of myself, by having had an opportunity of comparing my own weak, and vacillating character, with that of those around me. I should, under any circumstances, lament my departure from Delaward Park, which I consider the temple of domestic happiness; but, when I reflect that I leave it to fulfil an engagement that my heart renounces, I feel doubly grieved. The foolish, the unpardonable desire, instigated by vanity, of throwing off the shackles of childhood, first led me to listen to Lord Annandale's flatteries, and to overrule the prudent objections of my family; and the more reprehensible folly of not acknowledging my weakness, lest I should be considered a child, has induced me to persevere in it.

The nearer the time approaches for pronouncing the irrevocable vows, the more do I dread this marriage; and yet I have not courage to avow my feelings to those who possess the power of extricating me. A presentiment of evil continually hangs over my mind. It was not thus that Lady Delaward met her affianced husband at the altar! Fool—fool that I am, to compare myself in aught with one so good, so wise as she! Come to me as soon as you can, but come without mockery on your tongue, or ridicule in your eye; for my heart is ill at ease, and my spirits are not in a tone to bear your *plaisanteries* just now.

Your affectionate

AUGUSTA.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO MADAME LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

Vernon Hall.

PITY me, *ma chère* Delphine! for here I am, doing penance in one of the most *tristes châteaux* in which ever luckless dame was immured for her sins. *Imaginez vous—mais, non,* you *cannot* imagine any thing half so horrid; *ergo,* I must describe it. But, to begin at the beginning, as all tales should.

I told you in my last that I was to be present at the nuptials of a certain young friend of mine, *belle comme un ange,* and innocent, too, as an angel, if all we are told of them be true. My little friend has enough of romance in her composition to make half-a-dozen modern heroines—enough giddiness to compromise thrice that number—and enough sensibility to be rendered wretched at the effects which that giddiness may produce. She is the strangest imaginable *mélange* of all imaginable qualities. Proud, without being vain, generous to profusion, impatient of restraint, yet docile as an infant under the influence of tenderness: loving her parents excessively, yet jealous of their asserting any control over her actions—a paternal right which, to do them justice, they rarely, if ever, exercise. Her own feelings would lead her to desire to inspire a desperate, or, as you French call it, *une grande passion, à la Byron.* Unhappily, too, she has been lately present at the marriage of a friend dearer to her than I am (though, strange to say, that friend is a stern Mentor, too,) and she has also resided some time at the house of that friend, whose stately happiness has awakened the dormant pride of my little beauty. The consequence is, forsooth, that she is no longer satisfied with the passion of Lord Annandale, and ardently desires to inspire a grave, a dignified, a respectful sentiment. Ha, ha! the very thought of this fantastic foolery makes me laugh. Having accepted the first offer she received (for she is yet little more than sixteen, and has not been presented in the world,) she discovers, that she does *not* love the man she has promised to wed; yet, is ashamed of revealing this circumstance to her parents, lest they should consider her a weak, vacillating child; which is precisely what she is, and a spoiled one into the bargain, by the unexampled indulgence of her doting father and mother.

All that I have now told you, Lady Au-

gusta has written to me; and a little encouragement on my part would have led her to be equally confidential with her friends. But, this encouragement I did not, would not give her, for reasons of my own; nay, I have done all in my power to induce her to fulfil her engagement. Be it known to you, *belle et bonne* Delphine, that, being extremely tired of the society of *madame ma tante* in the country, and extremely anxious to pass the ensuing season in London, my sole chance for the accomplishment of this desideratum, is to get Lady Augusta converted from a giddy and useless *demoiselle* just emerging from her governess and nursery, into a *dame à la mode;* a useful chaperon, in whose brilliant mansion in town I may secure myself a *séjour*. I am eight years, *bien sonnés*, the senior of my friend, and have acquired an influence over her, of the extent of which even she is unconscious. Should her lord disapprove of my spending as much time as I choose beneath his roof, I can always, by insinuating to her that he treats her as a child, excite her to rebel against his power. At present, however, I see no probability of being necessitated to practise this stratagem, for he appears very tractable.

I had intended taking up my abode for the season with *notre amie, la comtesse; mais, helas!* some reports of her impropriety of conduct, that (*entre nous soit dit*) admit not of denial or defence, have reached *ma tante*, who would not hear of my resting a single night beneath her roof; nay, who will not hear of my keeping up any intimacy with her. I had, therefore, no other chance of visiting the metropolis, except that of converting Lady Augusta Vernon into Madame la Comtesse d'Annandale; and this desirable metamorphosis I have accomplished.

On my arrival here, I found *ma petite* heroine, a second Niobe, all tears: her *futur* evidently mortified at her lachrymose propensity; her papa and mamma all wonder at her melancholy; and a certain Marquess of Nottingham looking as if he too could have wept, merely for the pleasure of keeping her company. This, you will allow, was an unpromising commencement; yet I have, by the exercise of tact—that virtue acquired in your country, and which is more useful than all the others combined—managed to restore a good understanding between all the parties.

I persuaded the sapient papa and mamma, that all their daughter's chagrin arose from regret at leaving *them;* and won their hearts by this protestation. I insinuated to *le futur*, that when his wife had an opportunity of comparing him with other men, she would be better able to appreciate her good fortune in having secured him. Had you seen the radiant smile with which this compliment was received, you would have acknowledged, that flattery is worth all the cosmetics in the world for beautifying those to whom it is administered. From that moment, Lord Annandale was my friend, and a sort of confidential intimacy is established between us, which I mean to turn to good account. There is one person here, however, whom I cannot manage; and I hate him, for that reason. I allude to the Marquess of Nottingham, who seemed, from the first moment of our acquaintance, to recede from my advances with a sort of instinctive dread, or dislike. I have carefully concealed my discovery of this sentiment, and continued to treat him with cheerful courtesy; but I have, nevertheless, frequently caught his eyes fixed on me with a scrutinising glance, more expressive of distrust than good will.

His glances have not, however, all been confined to me; for I have detected them fixed on Lady Augusta, with a mingled expression of admiration and pity, that was not to be mistaken. Her beauty, which I must admit to be of the first order, seemed to produce an overpowering effect on him when he was first presented to her. Her melancholy and *naïveté* have, apparently, increased his admiration; and I predict that, before a year, he will be *l'ami de maison*, instead of simply *l'ami de milord*, as at present.

Nothing could be more sentimental and *larmoyant* than the eight-and-forty hours passed here previous to *la noce*. Talk of the *ennui* of the half hour before dinner, passed in the library or drawing-room, while waiting for some unpolite guest, or dilatory *chef de cuisine!* It is nothing to the *ennui* of the hours preceding a wedding, as I can now testify. Fifty times I expected that Lady Augusta, in a fit of sensibility, would have declared her aversion from the fulfilment of the contract; and I am sure that had she done so, Lord Nottingham would have rejoiced. I prevented this step, however, by drawing the most brilliant prospects of the future to her; but still more, by my old stratagem, dwelling on the animadversions to which such a proceeding would expose her, and the certainty of being, for years to come, treated as a child by her father and mo-

ther. This last argument was, as heretofore, irresistible, and led her to the altar of Hymen, a reluctant, because an unloving bride.

Yet, even I—though little used to the melting mood, Heaven knows—felt some uneasy twitching in the *muscle cru* called heart, when I saw the dreadful paleness her face assumed, and the large drops that chased each other down her young fair cheeks, as she approached to pronounce the irrevocable vows. Lord Nottingham, who attended as bridesman, was almost as *triste* as the bride; and Lord and Lady Vernon wept nearly as much as if death, and not a husband, was about to take off their darling. Previously to my arrival, I had meditated a little romance, of winning the heart of the bridesman by enacting the sentimental; but an hour in Lord Nottingham's company convinced me of the utter hopelessness of such an attempt, and so I at once relinquished it. I think I could much more easily have captivated the bridegroom; for he is a vain, a very vain man, and so prone to admire himself, that any woman, not quite a fright, who vied with him in doing homage to his attractions, would stand a fair chance of being rewarded by his gratitude.

But, to return to the wedding. There we stood, more like some solemn procession than a hymeneal one: the bride clinging to her father's arm to the last, and looking like a maiden-blush rose, twined to a venerable oak, which bent down to shelter it from the storm; Lady Vernon, pale and weeping, leaning on Lord Nottingham, who seemed nearly as disconsolate as herself; and I, escorted by Lord Annandale, who was replying to my judiciously administered compliments, by warmly repeated invitations to spend some months with them.

Suppose, now, the due number of tears shed (and I protest there were enough to fill, at least, some fifty lachymatories;) the necessary responses pronounced, most inaudibly by the bride, and sonorously by the bridegroom; the nuptial benediction given; and the sobbing Lady Annandale torn with gentle violence from the arms of her mother, and placed in the travelling-carriage of her lord; which I saw driven off, with much the same feelings as those with which a ship-wrecked sailor, on a desert island, beholds a vessel pass at a distance, which might have rescued him from his solitary fate. Lord Nottingham, in pity, agreed to remain two or three days here, and I have promised to stay a week; at the expiration of which time I return to my aunt's, whose house, disagreeable as I have hitherto considered it, is less *triste* than this gloomy mansion, now that it is bereft of its sole attraction—the fair Augusta. In a fortnight, I am to join the Annandales in London; where I anticipate much enjoyment, *en revanche* for this dull visit.

You would have smiled, as I did, *en cachette*, had you witnessed the dinner given in honor of the nuptials; and the host and hostess, between smiles and tears—the latter, however, greatly preponderating—doing the honors to guests who, with the exception of Lord Nottingham and myself, might have served as specimens for a zoological garden, if one was formed, to exhibit the *lusus naturæ* of the human race, instead of animals. In France, where there are no old people, either in dress or mind, you have nothing like the antediluvian figures that every country neighborhood in England produces. In your gay land, you have old children, who have only exchanged, but not thrown by, their rattles; while here, most, if not all the aged people, give one the idea that they never could have been young children.

In the innocence of my heart, I attempted a few *plaisanteries*, at the expense of some of the lame, blind, and deaf, who formed a part of the *Hôpital des INCURABLES* assembled round the dinner table: but the pragmatical Lord Nottingham maintained a look of immovable gravity; nay, rebuked me with a remark, that he never saw any thing risible in the infirmities of age. I have now described the delectable pleasures of an English wedding to you; and bestowed my tediousness half in pity to your expressed curiosity, and my own want of a more agreeable occupation. Write to me how you amuse yourself: that's the best way of telling how you are; for one is never ill when amused. Adieu, *chère* Delphine!

Votre amie affectionnée,

CAROLINE.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Vernon Hall.

I PROMISED, my dear Mordaunt, to write to you a description of our friend Annandale's bride; but, were I to tell you even half what I think of her, you would accuse

sent of my dear and too indulgent father, and mother; but false pride and the shame of being considered childish, and vacillating, have induced me to conceal the real state of my feelings from them. Often, while at Delaward Park, have I been tempted to make to you this unhappy avowal. Why, why did I not? for then all would have been well. It was not, my dear friend, until, beneath your roof, I was a witness to the happiness to be derived from a marriage of affection, that my eyes were quite opened to the loveless, cheerless destiny I had, by my own folly prepared for myself. But, even then, I struggled against the conviction. I tried to think, that when I saw Lord Annandale again, my reluctance might decrease; but the result has been otherwise—far, far otherwise; and I am the victim of my own wilfulness!

Why do I tell you all this *now;* when, before the avowal reaches you, my fate will be irrevocably sealed? Alas! I divulge it to you, because my very soul is steeped in sadness; and I have no one here, to whom it can be revealed, that would pity me, except those from whose affectionate hearts I would conceal it for ever. To leave the home of my infancy, even with one beloved, would always have been attended with pain; but to leave it with one for whom I entertained only indifference, is dreadful. A fearful presentiment of evil oppresses me. I feel as if I were about to abandon this place for ever; and now, for the first time, I am penetrated with a sense of all the tender, the too indulgent, affection of my dear father and mother, and all the gratitude it has excited in my breast.

During the last few days, I have often thought, that to dwell here as I have hitherto dwelt, surrounded by loving faces and affectionate protectors, would be happiness enough. Why did I ever wish for any other. How empty, how puerile, appear now the brilliant dreams in which my pruri ent fancy has indulged, of the gaieties the splendors of a fashionable life in London! when I should shine for my brief minute, among the evanescent meteors of the season, that flash and disappear. I turn from these my frivolous anticipations, at this moment, with feelings such as I might experience on the bed of death; and wonder and grieve that they could ever have dazzled me. *He*, who appeared as the necromancer who was to conduct me through the magnificent scenes he so glowingly described, now looks like the baffled mountebank that manœuvres his puppets before children, who, having examined their mechanism, and detected the springs that move them, despise alike the exhibition and the exhibitor. Had I never witnessed the happiness—the rational and soul satisfying happiness—which you enjoy, I might never have felt the reluctance I now experience to enter a career of dissipation, piloted by one who seems to think pleasure the end and aim of life.

I am sensible that I stand perilously in need of a high-minded and discerning monitor, to guide me through the mazes which I must enter; one who could not only give me a clew to the labyrinth, but still linger by my side, to support and cheer me. I require some fond heart in which I can confide—some firm mind, on which I can depend; and now, with a fearful consciousness of the almost vital necessity of these safeguards, I have forged fetters that bind me to one nearly as blind as—nay, more blind than myself; for my inexperience awakens a salutary alarm, while he is steeled and dulled, by custom, to the dangers I can discern, but know not how to escape. I feel as if, in having precluded myself from ever forming a marriage of affection, I had closed the only door to happiness that ever was open to me. Tell me, in pity tell me, my dear Mary, that though I have missed that portal of felicity, there is still another, less seductive yet not to be slighted—that of content; and I will endeavor to reach it.

Lord Annandale has never demanded why I wept, why I was plunged in sadness, ever since he came to claim my hand. Had he questioned me, I might have been saved; for such a demand would have led to an avowal of my feelings. *Now* it is too late; and I count the hours of freedom that still remain to me, as one on the bed of death does those of his fast-fleeting existence. Never have I thought of the dread hereafter so frequently, nor with so little alarm, as during the last few days. It no longer seems terrific to quit this fair earth, and the blue skies that canopy it, when one's fate is linked with that of a being from whom separation would occasion no sorrow. No! it appears to me as if the rending of such chains would console me for bursting the chain of life. Think of—pity—and, above all, love, your

AUGUSTA.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Delaward Park.

My friend Delaward is indeed a lucky man, my dear Mordaunt; for he has chosen a woman whom it is impossible to see without admiring, or to know without esteeming. I never saw a *ménage* that presents so tempting an example to a Benedict to forswear his solitary state, as Delaward's. One soul, one mind, seems to animate him and his lovely wife. Here is no disgusting display of the uxoriousness so often and indelicately protruded before friends, during the first months of wedded life, and as often followed by the indifference that succeeds unwisely indulged passions, leading to their inevitable result—satiety. No! perfect confidence, warm admiration, profound respect, and boundless content, reign between this happy couple, and bid fair to continue while they live. Lady Delaward is at once the most dignified and simple-mannered of her sex; one, before whom no man could utter a light word, or breathe an unholy thought. An atmosphere of pure and elevated sentiment seems to environ her; and all who approach are influenced by it. There is nothing chilling or repelling in her demeanor; for, though she has all the dignity of a matron, she has all the gentleness of a child: but there is an indescribable charm around her, that precludes the entrance of the vulgar and common-place topics with which we entertain the generality of her sex; or rather, to speak more accurately, the fashionable portion of it.

To tell Lady Delaward any one of the piquant anecdotes, or *histoires à double entente*, that are daily related to the women of our coterie in London would require an impudence that not even A——— possesses; though he, Heaven knows, is no pauper in that social bronze, which, like the famed Corinthian brass, contains all the elements of durity, additionally hardened and consolidated by the fierce fires to which it has been subjected. I worship that native purity which innocence alone can give, and which shines forth in every look, word, and action, of Lady Delaward; while I turn with disgust from that affected prudery, arising, if not from a participation, at least from a knowledge of evil, which induces certain of our ladies to cast down their eyes, look grave, and show the extent of their knowledge, or the prurieney of their imaginations, by discovering even in a harmless jest something to alarm their experienced feelings. I respect that woman, whose innate purity prevents those around her from uttering aught that could wound it, much more than her whose sensitive prudery continually reminds one that she is *au fait* of every possible interpretation of which a word of doubtful meaning admits.

And Lady Delaward, this "chaste and fair," but not inexpressive she—for she talks as angels might be imagined to talk, is the friend of Lady Annandale, and loves her as a younger sister. Nothing is more captivating to me than a cordial affection between two young and beautiful women. Perhaps it is its rarity that constitutes its charm; for nothing is more rare, notwithstanding the well-acted *rôles* of friendship we continually see got up in society between women who entertain a mutual detestation.

The unstable basis of such ephemeral fancies is selfishness; hence, it is not to be wondered at that the fragile superstructures soon totter and fall to the ground. A share in an opera-box, similarity of pursuits, a knowledge of each other's *liaisons*, which precludes embarrassment in those quartettos that invariably occur wherever these female Pylades and Orestes appear, are the motives of half the friendships existing among ladies of fashion. They herd continually together, address each other by the most loving epithets—pour into the ears of their admirers a thousand secrets of the concealed personal and moral defects, and the numberless artifices of their dear friends, to which they have recourse, in order to supply the want of beauty. It is thus we learn that poor Lady so and so, or Mrs. so and so, would be the most delightful person in the world; only that she happens to have every physical and almost every moral fault that ever fell to the lot of woman; but the greater part of which, owing to the blindness or stupidity of the world, are left to be discovered by the discriminating eyes of her dear friend, who relates them with such professions of regret at their existence.

Of how many women, whose complexions I have praised, have I not been told by their supposed devoted friends, and not without a smile at my ignorance, that they wore rouge; until I almost began to doubt whether such a thing as a real rosy cheek, proceeding from pure bright blood circulating within the epidermis, were a desideratum possible to be found. Every very fair woman I saw, was, as

the *sincere* friends of each informed me, indebted, not to nature, but art, for that delicate tint. In short, their frank and explicit confessions brought me to consider every handsome woman as a sort of modern Thisbe, peeping behind a wall of white and red. But this was not all. The jetty locks I admired were, I was informed, the properties of the ladies they adored, only because they had *bought* them; the pearly teeth I praised, were *chefs d'œuvre* from some fashionable dentist; the dark eye-brows that struck my fancy, owed, I was told, their rich black to the newly invented dye; and even the red lips, emulating the hue of coral, had been tinged, as my informant stated, by a chemical preparation. Such being the disclosures made by friends in fashionable life, it is not much to be wondered at that I am incredulous as to the sincerity of the sentiment of friendship between fine ladies.

I have hitherto only believed it to exist in the mind of an acknowledged beauty towards some remarkably plain but well-bred woman, who served as a foil to her, and did not hate her for her own inferiority. I am, however, no longer a sceptic as to female friendship. Lady Delaward, young and beautiful, feels it, in the utmost signification of the term, for Lady Annandale. Hers are not the praises that artful women, themselves handsome, think it prudent to bestow on any other beauty named in their presence; cunningly selecting her defects for their exaggerated eulogiums, and leaving unnoticed in their panegyrics, the charms that would have justified them.

No: Lady Delaward, when I extolled the personal fascinations of Lady Annandale, simply answered, "Yes, she is the most lovely person I ever saw." But, when I said that she appeared very amiable, her countenance sparkled with animation, and her cheeks became tinged with a brighter hue; her whole face, while under the glowing effects of her warm affection for her friend, reminding me of one of those fine alabaster vases, with a light in it, that displays even more its own spotless purity, than it illumines the object around it.

"You should have known Augusta," she said, "as I have done, since her infancy, to be able to appreciate all the admirable qualities she possesses; qualities which not even the undue indulgence of her doting father and mother has been able to obscure."

"I do not like her friend, Miss Montressor," observed I.

Lady Delward was silent; but a grave expression stole over her face.

"Neither do we," replied Delaward; "and I heartily wish Lady Annandale may see as little of her as possible, for I think her ———"

"Hush! my dear Delaward," said his wife, gently; "we must not prejudice others against her."

At this moment a letter was brought to Lord Delaward, who, having broke the seal, handed its enclosure to Lady Delaward, who exclaimed, "A letter from dear Augusta!"

She eagerly opened it; and I remarked that, as she perused it, her brow indicated that its contents gave her pain. This sentiment evidently increased as she continued to read; and, at length, she rose and quitted the room, as if overpowered by her feelings.

Delaward hastily followed her, and left me, I candidly confess, experiencing for the first time in my life, an insatiable curiosity. Lady Annandale has, probably, in this letter, explained the source of the sadness in which I saw her plunged the three days previous to her marriage. How I should like to read it! It is strange, it is unaccountable, the deep interest I take in her. Had I beheld her all gaiety and smiles, I should, if I know myself, have merely thought of her as a beautiful girl, like one of those lovely creatures we see, admire, and forget. But her melancholy and apparent indifference towards Annandale, have invested her with a much deeper interest for me than her beauty, faultless as it is, could ever have excited. What can that letter have contained, to awaken such regret as was displayed in Lady Delaward's looks and manner?

I must leave you; a necessity, at which the length and dulness of this epistle will make you rejoice.

Yours ever,

NOTTINGHAM.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

HERE I am, *chère et belle amie*, once more *chez ma tante*, who is even more *ennuyeuse* than ever, which is saying a great deal; and who preaches morality to

me from morning until night. You should have seen your poor friend demurely seated *vis-a-vis* to the patriarchal Lord and Lady Vernon, in their family coach, returning to the temple of *ennui*, as I style the mansion of *madame ma tante;* listening to the oft-beginning, never-ending praises of their daughter, who, if they are to be credited, is a perfect paragon of perfection; while I know her to be nothing more nor less than a very pretty, capricious, spoiled child, wilful and froward in no ordinary degree. Perhaps it is this very knowledge that makes me feel attached to Augusta; for, paradoxical as it may appear, it is easier to pardon the faults, than the virtues of our friends; because the first excite a self-complacency always agreeable; and the second, a sense of humiliation, which indisposes us towards the inflictor.

After all, it is a very agreeable thing to have a doting old papa and mamma—doting in the double sense of the word—who look at all one's thoughts, words, and actions, through the bright medium of affection, and not through the dull one of reason, as my sapient aunt views mine. I really believe she considers me as nothing short of a very wicked person; for, the homilies with which she indulges me on every possible occasion, prove how greatly she imagines me to stand in need of them.

The Vernons, *mari et femme*, are gone to the modern Grandisons, as I call Lord and Lady Delaward; where they are to remain some time, to be consoled for the loss of their daughter. They had made up their minds, I fancy, to accompany Lady Annandale to town; but, I advised Lord Annandale not to encourage this intention, unless he wished to be the subject of ridicule to all London, by importing this antediluvian couple (in their old-fashioned coach, which resembles the ark of Noah) into the fashionable world, to shock universally, and be universally shocked. I tried to enlighten my friend Augusta on this point; but she who knows nothing of the manners of society, was indignant at even the supposition that her dear father and mother could ever be *de trop* any where; so I left her to indulge in her parental illusion, and directed my counsel to her lord, who is more tractable.

Lord Nottingham preceded the Vernons to Delaward Park. I like not that man; and, I fancy, there is an instinctive dislike between us. He is the *beau idéal* of an Englishman: proud, reserved, and dignified, with a degree of self-respect that precludes him from ever compromising himself; and with that scrupulous good-breeding, which deprives those who dislike him of the pleasure of attacking him. He is a man whom it is impossible to ridicule; nay more, he imposes a certain respectful restraint, even on his opponents, by his high bearing and polished manners. His mind seems to be very cultivated, and his person and face are remarkably *distingues;* the highest praise, in my opinion, that can be accorded to male good looks. He is the sort of a person *à faire fureur à Paris*, and to remain wholly unmoved by his success; and yet, "this most potent, grave, and reverend signior," is evidently captivated by the *naïve* loveliness of a spoiled child of sixteen, having hardly deigned to bestow a glance on the matured charms of your friend. I tried him with all my witcheries—let fly a shower of *bon mots*, *reparties*, and brilliant anecdotes, that would have covered me with laurels in your *recherché* circle in the Rue St. Honore; but, they fell as unheeded as a display of fire works before an astronomer examining he *debut* of the last new comet. I then assailed him with piquant criticisms on all the modern French authors: talked of the vigorous power of Victor Hugo; the mysticism and sentimentality of Balzac; the passion and eloquence of George Sand; the maritime descriptions of Eugene Sue; the *comique* of Paul de Kock; and the *hardiesse* of Jules Janin. The man, instead of being charmed, looked perfectly petrified: and without replying to me, turned to Augusta, and asked her, with a look of undissembled alarm, whether she had read those authors? A weight seemed taken off his mind when she answered in the negative, and stated, that the only modern French books she was in the habit of persuing, were those of Chateaubriand, De Lamartine, and Casimir de la Vigne.

"They are the writers that I also read," said Lord Nottingham, "and the ones that I should place in the hands of a wife, or sister."

"You surely cannot be so very English—which, with me, is a synonyme for prudish—as to object to a young lady's perusal of the authors I have named?" asked I; "authors, whose works contain the truest pictures of actual life?"

"There is much, very much in actual life, Miss Montressor, of which I should wish a wife or sister of mine, to remain in

total ignorance. On this point I am ready to exclaim with the poet,

'Give me a friend, within whose well-poised mind
Experience holds her seat. But let my bride
Be innocent, as flowers, that fragrance shed,
Yet know not they are sweet.'"

"Oh! you," I resumed, "are one of those who would treat women as pretty puppets, formed for your playthings, and not admit us to a free communion of that knowledge of which you are so proud?"

"I would debar your sex from no part of the knowledge of which ours ought to be proud; but, I do not think, in proscribing the modern authors you have enumerated, such a motive could be fairly attributed to me. I would have the reading of women confined to works of which the morality and purity might serve to strengthen their own; and I can no more approve of placing in their hands books that tend to make them acquainted with all the vices that sully human nature, however well portrayed, than I should approve their witnessing the scenes where such vices are committed, as a useful philosophical lesson. Women, Miss Montressor, according to my opinion, should know no more of the crimes of human nature, than they do of the fearful maladies to which it is subject. You would not have our matrons study anatomy, or visit the hospitals, in order to see to what infirmities flesh is heir; it is enough for them to be aware that mortal beings are sometimes sorely smitten by loathsome diseases, without investigating, or studying them: so, is it sufficient for them to know, that vice and error exist, without analytically examining the symptoms, causes, and effects, so artistically displayed in the authors to whom you have referred."

"You, probably, think we are only good, because we are what you would call innocent, and what I term ignorant, Lord Nottingham?"

"Happy and charming, I am sure you are, only while you are innocent," he replied; "for, a knowledge of evil, even though it guard from a participation in it, leaves a stain on the purity of the female mind, and a cloud on its brightness: for a high-souled woman, while abhorring the crimes she discovers, where she thought all was fair, must pity while abhorring; and deep pity dims happiness."

Augusta listened to him with an attention I never before saw her pay to any one; her eyes were fixed on his expressive face, which, always handsome, was now lighted up with increased animation; and I marked her turn from him, to look at the man who was, the next day, to become her husband, with a glance in which neither affection nor approbation was visible—to my eyes, at least. She was probably at that moment drawing a comparison between the two, not advantageous to the latter.

In this little discussion, and during the pauses of Lord Nottingham, Lord Annandale defended my favorite authors with more zeal than ability; consequently his flimsy arguments rather injured than served my cause.

"Surely, my dear Nottingham, your are unjustly severe?—Bah! *mon ami*, you are too prudish. What can be more droll, or more amusing, than some of the scenes in the works you have censured? I quite agree with Miss Montressor in admiring them.—Well, you may say what you please; but be assured that you will find few people so cynical as not to be vastly amused by those writers."

I tried to get up an argument on the romantic and classical schools for writing, and instituted comparisons between the passionate and reflective works of our day, giving the preference to the former. But all my erudition was thrown away, at least on Lord Nottingham, for he replied not to my tirade *à la* De Staël; but Lord Annandale seemed duly impressed with the extent and variety of my *savoir*, and has, I can perceive, formed a high notion of my powers. What *if* this *preux chevalier*, Lord Nottingham, were to become enamored of Lady Annandale, and *if* she were to bestow on him her vacant heart—for vacant I know it is—and *if* I were to blow the incipient flame into a blaze! I see a whole romance, nay, two romances, comprised in these three little—IFS. Should nothing more eligible, as the elderly ladies say, offer, I may effect a *dénoûment* to this pretty fiction, which may place the coronet of a countess on my brow, and a strawberry one on that of Augusta—no bad exchange for her, I think, and not a very bad arrangement for myself. In a few weeks I shall be in London, whence you shall be kept in *au courant* of all I do, or intend to do. I hope *notre comtesse* will not, with her usual indiscretion, show me up, by relating any of our little peccadilloes at Vienna and Paris; but she is a sad *bavarde*, and commits her friends nearly as much as she compromises herself, by her impru-

dence. *Addio, cara* Delphine! Wish success to your

CAROLINE.

LADY DELAWARD TO LADY ANNANDALE.

I WILL not dwell on the pain your letter has given me, my dearest Augusta, neither will I enter farther into the subject of the imprudence you have committed; retrospection being now useless, except as a warning for the future, dearly paid for by the experience of the little happiness to be derived from a perseverance in wilfulness. Lord Annandale is now your husband; and I cannot think so ill of him as to believe that he would have become so, had he known your repugnance at the last to form the tie. It *is* formed, and *is* indissoluble; and by this, your first and fatal error of judgment, you have placed yourself in a position to demand a never-ceasing prudence, and never-slumbering self-examination, to enable you to fulfil the duties you have imposed on yourself. To a wife who loves her husband those duties become pleasures, because she knows that on their fulfilment depends his happiness, as well as her own; but to one who is so unfortunate as to marry without a sincere and devoted affection, they should be, if possible, more sacred, as their scrupulous discharge is the only atonement she can offer for withholding that love which is to sweeten the draught of life; and which every man has a right to expect from her who voluntarily bestows on him her hand. Many have been the marriages without love that have been peaceful and respectable, if not happy. You, my dear Augusta, having committed a serious fault, must redeem it by your virtue; and prove, that not to be wise, is not to be unworthy. Leave no effort untried to attach yourself to Lord Annandale: gratitude for his attachment to you ought to excite kind feelings; and, when to this is added the knowledge, that, had you not accepted his offered hand, he might have found many lovely and amiable women who would gladly have become his wife, and given him their affections, you surely cannot act otherwise than as a kind, indulgent friend, who will make his home cheerful, and his name respected. You must seriously examine your opinions and sentiments with regard to him; for indifference or dislike are great magnifiers of the defects of those whom we view through their medium, and we are seldom just when we permit their intervention. If he is not *all* that you could desire, despair not of rendering him so; for much depends on the use you make of the influence you will naturally acquire over him. Lord Annandale has lived too much in the great world to have escaped the faults it engenders; its glare and artificial enjoyments may have, probably, blunted the fine edge of his feelings, and led him to descend to less wise, and less elevated views and pursuits. Let it be your task to lead him back to a more healthy tone of mind, and to more rational occupations; and be it yours to reap a rich reward, in the consciousness of duties fulfilled, and of tranquillity, if not happiness, secured. Remember that he bears a portion of the chain that binds you together—a chain to which he willingly submitted, because he believed that you would make his bondage light, in preferring him to all other men; a natural conclusion, knowing, as he does, that it was solely owing to your request that your parents yielded him your hand. Virtue, generosity, pity, all call on you, my dearest friend, to respect his happiness, even though you may have sacrificed some portion of your own. You owe this fulfilment of your duty no less to your excellent father and mother than to Lord Annandale. Think what would be their despair, if, having yielded their daughter so much sooner than parents in general are called on to relinquish their children, and to a husband chosen by *her*, and not by them, they discovered that she had imposed on their credulous affection, and left them, who so loved her, for one she did not love. Spare them this blow, my dearest Augusta; and let your next letter bring better tidings to your true friend,

M. DELAWARD.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

Delaward Park.

I NEVER thought so seriously, nor with such complacency, of marriage, my dear Mordaunt, as since I have been beneath this peaceful and happy roof, which seems fitted to be the very temple where Hymen ought to be worshipped. You know that Delaward was always my model of what a nobleman should be; but, I assure you, I now look on him as the model of husbands—a part, few, even of the best men, perform with that just mixture of firmness,

tained that Miss Montressor's sole wealth consisted in her beauty, directed to her only the most dishonorable views; to which, ere long, she fell a victim.

"The young ladies were equally compromised; and both expected the same atonement would be offered. This hope was only fulfilled on the part of the Marquis de Villeroi; for the day that saw him privately lead Mademoiselle de Meronville to the altar, witnessed the impromptu departure of the Chevalier de Carency from Florence, leaving Caroline Montressor a prey to all feelings save remorse; for that sentiment, hers, unfortunately, was not a spirit to feel. The Duchesse de Meronville pardoned a step in her daughter that was now irrevocable; and the Marquis and Marquise de Villeroi concealed the guilt of Caroline Montressor, and extended towards her a friendship the sole basis of which was pity. A letter, soon after received from the faithless lover, under cover to Villeroi, gave the finishing blow to every womanly and proper feeling in this unhappy girl; and from the hour of its receipt may be dated the commencement of her total demoralisation. He stated, that in loving her, and seeking the gratification of that love, he but obeyed the dictates of nature and philosophy; and he left her from a conviction that their meetings would be interrupted by the *esclandre* which the marriage of her friend would occasion, or their pleasure be destroyed by reproaches, because he could not, or would not, like his friend, finish their charming episode of love, by a comedy *larmoyanate* of marriage—a finale, which his poverty forbade, and his principles opposed.

"'You are young and charming, *ma belle*,' he wrote, 'and may command a rich marriage, which should be the end and aim of every portionless beauty. When you have accomplished this desideratum, I shall be one of the most humble of your slaves; but until then, let me, as a friend, recommend you to be prudent in your conduct. The interests of women and men are wholly opposed: that of the one is to get married; and that of the other, to avoid it by every possible means; unless driven to the altar of Hymen by the goading scourge of grim poverty, that gaunt spectre, who had *compelled* more victims to the fatal step than love ever *enticed* to it. Be circumspect, then, *ma chère petite;* count on my discretion; and let us hope to meet in Paris at some future day, when you shall have imposed the galling chains of marriage on one of your rich and dull compatriots, and emancipated yourself from the thraldom of *demoiselleship*. Wealth gives every thing except youth, beauty, and health—these you possess; and, if you play your part skilfully, the riches you may attain. Keep this object always in view; and learn to smile at the *fade* sentimentality and romance, that never fail to subjugate your sex to ours. Adieu, *ma chère* Caroline; *aimez toujours votre*.

HENRI.'

"Caroline Montressor neither wept nor pined at this confirmation of the unworthiness of him for whom she had sacrificed her honor. The last French novel she had read, had displayed a heroine abandoned under similar circumstances, 'who rose (as the writer stated) superior to the blow aimed at her peace, and, ascending the pedestal appropriated to talent and wit, hurled around her the weapons of both; captivating, while wounding and mocking, the victims she made.

"'Such will I be,' said Caroline to herself; and, from this day, she devoted all her time, all her energies, to acquiring a proficiency in those accomplishments most likely to aid her views. She was permitted by her foolish mother to accompany the Villeroïs, to Vienna, while she established herself as a resident in the hotel de Meronville at Paris, with her duchesse, who offered her a home during the absence of the young people. At Vienna the beauty and talents of Miss Montressor attracted general attention; and more than one of her admirers would have become suitors for her hand, had they not been alarmed from a step so irrevocable by an imprudent intimacy which she formed with the Comtesse Hohenlinden, whose conduct furnished the common topic of scandalous animadversion in every circle.

"The young Duc de R., at that period the cynosure of the neighboring eyes at Vienna, soon became fascinated with the English beauty; and the comtesse, whose sympathy for the flames of others was in proportion to the indulgence of her own, lost no opportunity of affording him interviews with her friend. But Caroline, who, in the adoption of de Carency's counsel, never lost sight of the prospect of a rich marriage, conscious that a *liaison* with the royal Duc would lead to no such termination, maintained her prudence; and established for herself, in his eyes and those of the comtesse, a reputation for virtue such as they, at least, had rarely

encountered. The good Emperor lavished presents on the meritorious young woman who could resist his captivating grandson; and Caroline Montressor became the fashionable belle of the court circle. Her intimacy with the Comtesse of Hohenlinden opened to her a new page in the history of human life. She saw in her a woman of high rank and great fortune, almost wholly regardless, not only of virtue, but of its appearance, living only for the gratification of her passions; and so volatile and capricious, that the *enguement* of yesterday gave place to the one of to-day: and this woman, braving public opinion and outraging delicacy, was *fêtée* by all. No one doubted her culpability, and some censured, but *all* received her. Such an example fixed Caroline Montressor for ever in her false and pernicious principles; and the *hommage* she saw offered to her guilty friend, finally overthrew in her mind all the barriers that separate the good from the vicious.

"The works of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot, were eagerly perused by this young female philosopher; who found herself, at seventeen, a willing believer in their sophistries, and ready to do aught that could facilitate her course in the ambitious path she had entered. She became the *confidente* of the Comtesse, who had now formed an attachment to the Marquis de Villeroi; and was, nearly at the same time, intrusted with a love affair of his young wife. Neither shocked nor disgusted at these disclosures, she encouraged both in their reprehensible conduct, because it rendered her necessary to them; and sank herself still lower, by this foul participation in their guilt.

"Returned to France, she continued to reside with the Villerois, over both of whom she had acquired an ascendancy that gave rise to a thousand evil reports. These reports were so generally circulated and believed at Paris, that they precluded the chance of her forming a marriage at all suitable to her views; and when, several years afterwards, on the death of her mother, her aunt, who came to Paris to offer her protection to her niece, saw the supremacy she exercised in the establishment of the Villerois, and heard the reports in question, she gave her the alternative of returning at once to England, or of being altogether abandoned by her sole relative.

"The wish of forming a good marriage in England, that Eldorado of rich husbands, induced her to accept her aunt's protection, much to the dissatisfaction of the Villerois, who found her presence and lively conversation an agreeable relief to the dulness of their occasional *tête-à-têtes*, while she was ever a useful assistant to their plans of mutual deception. She left them, promising to return, if she failed in accomplishing her views. Subsequently, finding her aunt's residence, where she had been a considerable time fixed, most uncongenial to her tastes, she contrived to render herself so agreeable to Lady Annandale, that she has been a frequent guest at Lord Vernon's and, I doubt not, has influenced his daughter in forming this marriage.

"All that I have told you, I heard from Lord Warrenborough, who heard it from the Chevalier de Carency himself at Turin, a short time after, when that dissolute man told it as an amusing example of his triumphs over female virtue: and I have communicated it to you in the belief that, having met Miss Montressor, the romance in which she has played so discreditable a *rôle* may amuse you. Judge, then, how Lady Delaward and I tremble for her poor young friend being beneath the same roof, and exposed to the contaminating example of such a person. Already has my wife endeavored to warn Lady Annandale of the unworthiness of Miss Montressor, although, until yesterday, I never disclosed its extent to her. She considers, and I agree with the opinion, that it is her duty to lay the fact before her friend, and will write to her immediately on the subject."

Here ended Delaward's tale to me, and here must end my voluminous epistle to you. Is it not worthy of a French novel? Poor Lady Annandale! into *what* hands has she fallen!

Ever yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

Grosvenor Square, April.

YOUR letter really alarmed me, my dear Mary; and I have asked myself, more than once, what mine could have contained to have called forth such anxiety, not about my feelings (and they most required it,) but my conduct, which, I trust, will ever be blameless. I do not, and feel I never can, love Lord Annandale; but does this fact indicate that I shall be an unkind or

an unfaithful wife? I trust not. If you knew him, you would entertain no fears for his happiness, whatever you might for mine. As long as he sees me well looking, well dressed, and well received, he will be satisfied: a clouded brow, a paler cheek, or a stifled sigh, are not things to alarm him, or even to be remarked. He thinks there are only two species of women, the romantic, who are the young, and who, knowing nothing of real life, indulge in the illusions of imagination, sigh for an ideal happiness, and shrink from the positive one within their reach; and the unromantic, who are not the very young, and, having lost all the illusions of life, are content with the homely and unimaginative enjoyments it can bestow.

He concludes that I shall arrive at this last state in due time; and, *en attendant*, thinks that it is not unbecoming to see a very young woman pale and pensive. He does not know that, before youth has learned to discriminate, the heart sometimes becomes suddenly matured, and supplies the fatal knowledge which is usually the growth of experience. It seems to me as if I had jumped from childhood to maturity at one step; but that step has been over a precipice, in which my happiness has been ingulfed. It is not, it surely cannot be, a spirit of envy that actuates me; but ever since I have seen *your* home, and witnessed how *you* are loved, my very soul has pined and ached with a consciousness of the want of a similar blessing. Were I so loved, and by one I could respect, I think I could be happy, even though I felt not that fond, that lively tenderness, which I have seen sparkle in your eyes, and tremble on your lips, when your husband has approached. It is a sad thing to look at happiness only through another's eyes. It seems to me as if the being loved, cherished and respected, by a good and honorable man, would be sufficient for happiness: one who mingled you with all his thoughts of this world, and all his hopes of the next; who left you with regret, and returned with delight; to whom you could reveal every sentiment, every feeling, as to a second self; one whose experience was to be your guide, and whose firmness your protection. You and Lord Delaward give me the idea of two rational beings, united to divide the cares and share the blessings of life; while Lord Annandale and I remind me of two persons forming a party of pleasure, into which as much amusement as possible is to be crowded, and who have no other ties, or aim, or end.

The evening we came to town, he proposed taking me to the opera: I declined, because I was fatigued, and wished to pass the first evening of my *séjour* in a house of my own, quietly at home. I explained these feelings; he assented, and left the room—to see to the comfort of my establishment in my own apartment, as I concluded: but no such thing. After an hour's absence he returned, dressed for the evening, wondered that I had not ordered tea, and said he was going for an hour to the opera, and then to the club; saying which, he kissed my hand, and hurried off, leaving me no less surprised than mortified at being thus deserted. Does not this first *triste* evening in my new abode seem ominous? I will endeavor not to entertain the apprehension.

Over the chimney-piece in the library in which I was seated, I observed the portrait of a lady, so beautiful, yet with such a melancholy countenance, that it increased the sadness I already endured. I felt sure it must be that of his wife—of her who was my predecessor here. He had not once looked at it on entering. How heartless! This portrait reminded me that he was a father; and its sweet, mournful expression occasioned me to experience a deep interest with regard to her child.

"She, too," thought I, "has been here neglected, and, like me, abandoned to solitude. She, perhaps, loved him, and wept in agony the neglect that pains me so little: she was, therefore, more wretched." And again I looked at that beautiful face, the eyes of which seemed to return my glance with mild pensiveness. There are some hearts in which the germ of melancholy is implanted even from their earliest youth, and maturity only strengthens it. On such persons, the inevitable ills of life fall with a weight that, if it crush them not wholly, leaves them eternally bruised in spirit. Such a spirit was hers on whose resemblance I gazed with an interest that no portrait ever before excited in me. Every thing in that pale lovely face announces it. Yes; I will be kind to her child; that sweet, appealing look pleads not in vain.

I experience a strange feeling in this house, as though I were an intruder; whichever way I turn, I see around me all the indications that I have taken another's place. The house was fitted up to receive Lady Annandale as a bride; her cipher, in-

termingled with flowers and gold arabesques, ornaments all the furniture in the apartments appropriated to me, the gloss scarcely off them; and she—in her grave, and I—in her place. And yet the separation caused by death appears to me less terrible than the moral divorce of two hearts that ought to love, but cannot sympathise. She on whose portrait I gaze is not more separated from him than I am. An inseparable barrier, that of indifference, divides us, but *he* heeds it not: the heart is a possession he seeks not to acquire. There is a picture of her in every room. He must have loved, or have fancied that he loved her: yet now *he* seems to think of her no more than if she had never existed, while *I* can think of nothing else. How can we forget those dear to us, and lost? Methinks that,

> From out the grave of every friend we loved
> Springs up a flower (as fabulists relate,
> Arose from the red stream of Ajax's wounds;)
> Memory 'tis named; and, watered by our tears,
> It lives and grows, until its fibres strike
> Into the heart, nor leave it until death.

No; I was mistaken when I said he must have loved her. There is an indelicacy and insensibility in this parade of all the memorials of his first wife, that prove he could never have loved *either* of us. If *I loved* him, I could not bear all these mementos of another; and, even as it is, when he stoops to kiss my brow, I find myself unconsciously looking at her picture, as if I expected it would betray some symptoms of dissatisfaction. When he returned home, which was not until four o'clock in the morning, he hardly apologised, either for the length of his absence, or the unseasonableness of his return.

He was, as he always is, in high spirits; (how I dislike a person that is *always* in high spirits!) seemed elated by his encounter with his different friends, and talked of the parties he had arranged for me; an endless succession, it would appear, of dinners, balls, and *soirées*. I asked, where was his child? and he said—

"Oh, by the by, I quite forgot poor little St. Aubyn. He is at Richmond, for he has been ailing—cutting his teeth, or afflicted by some other of the endless maladies to which children are subject."

And this man is a father! I will go to Richmond to-morrow, and see this poor child, who shall not, while I live, want a mother. I already love, because I pity it; and shall derive from it more pleasure than from all the gaieties which its parent has promised to obtain for me.

Ever your affectionate

AUGUSTA.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

INDEED you are to blame, dear Augusta, in thus giving way to depression, and expecting from Lord Annandale a sensibility that few men ever retained after twenty-five; and none, even to that period, who have made society and its artificial enjoyments the principal object of life. There has been no deception on his part; he showed himself, from the beginning, in his true colors; one of those who like, and are liked by, the world, as they style that small portion of it which is comprised in the fashionable circle of the metropolis. The *succès de société* is the utmost extent of his ambition; he has acquired it himself, at the expense of the more solid and sterling qualities, which a contact with the world is so calculated to injure, if not destroy; and he now, doubtless, wishes to secure it for you. He captivated your youthful mind by his descriptions of that society in which you are now called to enact a part; and you are unreasonable in expecting that he will abandon the habits which he has indulged for years, ignorant, as he probably is, that you disapprove of them.

A romantic mind, to sympathise with yours, you must not expect to find in Lord Annandale; but a kind, good-tempered, and cheerful companion, you may calculate upon, and must be content with. This is more than falls to the lot of all; for remember that happiness consists, not in having much, but in being content with little. Greatly as I condemn artifice, there is sometimes a necessity of adopting it in married life. I refer to, perhaps, the only occasion where it is innocent, which is, that of not appearing conscious of a husband's faults. As long as he believes they are not discovered, his vanity, if no better feeling influence him, will induce his studious concealment of them, which is the first step towards their amendment: but, when once he knows they are exposed, he becomes reckless and callous.

Heaven forbid, my dear Augusta, that I should have any doubts of your conduct being always what it ought to be; what

I dread in you is a disregard of appearances—a neglect of the *shadow* of goodness, while you are satisfied with possessing the *substance*. This is what is most to be dreaded; for all very young women, too early thrown into the vortex of the artificial stream of fashion in which so many reputations, if not virtues, have been ingulfed. Invaluable as is the honor of a woman, be assured the possession cannot console her for the loss of its reputation—a loss to which her own heedless inexperience, or levity, continually conduces, and which leaves her, through the remainder of her life, a target for the arrows of the censorious.

I learn, with regret, that Miss Montressor is to take up her abode with you this season. Beware of following her counsel, or letting her introduce into your home circle any of the persons with whom she associated while on the Continent; of many of whom report speaks most injuriously. You know how I dread giving credence to, or repeating scandal, but I cannot reconcile it with my sense of duty towards you, to conceal the real character of this unworthy person, whom I sincerely wish you had never known, as she is the last woman I should wish to see installed beneath your roof.* Let no human being know that your husband is not an object of your strongest attachment; for, *that* once known, you will become an object of speculation and distrust to those who, judging of all women by a few of the worst specimens of the sex, conclude, that she who loves not her husband, either loves, or is ready to love, some one else.

Avoid intimacies, either male or female, except with persons whose reputations are calculated to add lustre to yours, for much evil is often occasioned by a contrary conduct. All the faults attributed to a woman in society are supposed to be known, and shared, by the females of the *clique* in which she lives, and, if they have ever been suspected of indiscretion, she shares in the censure. The *habitués* of a house give the color to the reputation of its mistress. The men are invariably supposed, by the good-natured world, to be more than mere acquaintances; and the women, *confidentes*. It is by such imprudent habits of familiarity that many a woman has lost her reputation, while her virtue has remained unimpaired.

* Here follows a statement similar to the one, made by Lord Delaward to Lord Nottingham, which to avoid repetition, we have suppressed.

Your excellent parents are well, and as cheerful as our united attention can make them; but they pine for you, and intend soon joining you in London. Lord Nottingham leaves us to-morrow; he is a very agreeable companion, possesses a highly cultivated mind, and great warmth of heart. He is one of the few with whom I would consent to share my husband's friendship. His attention to your father and mother has been unremitting; and they have formed a strong attachment to him.

Write to me often, dearest Augusta; tell all you think and feel, to one who, if she sometimes chides you like an elder sister, always feels the love of one.

M. Delaward.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

Dearest Mary:—I kept my resolution; and, in defiance of Lord Annandale's representations of the unreasonableness of the measure, I proceeded to Richmond, the day after my arrival in London. My perseverance in this scheme at first discomposed him, for he had, as he asserted, made engagements for me; but at length he yielded, and, to my dismay, said something about his considering my impatience to see his child as a flattering proof of my affection for its father. I blushed, from consciousness of how unmerited was this eulogium, for so he evidently meant it to be; and, as a reward for my supposed tenderness, he offered to accompany me to Richmond, as if it were a sacrifice on his part, having, as he declared, a thousand things to do.

On arriving at a little damp-looking cottage, overgrown with ivy, situated in a rural lane at Richmond, we found the nurse absent; and the poor child I came to see, consigned to an untidy slip-shod girl of fifteen, who was endeavoring to pacify it, by jingling a bunch of keys, and singing, or rather screaming a tune. The nurse, she said, had gone out with a friend, only five minutes before.

"No! she be gone out ever so long ago," exclaimed a dirty child, of about six years old, who was torturing an unfortunate kitten; "mammy went ever so long ago, with that cross man who eats half our dinner."

"Hold your tongue, Bessy," ejaculated the elder, "and don't speak till you're spoken to;" an advice that appeared by

no means to gratify her to whom it was addressed.

Never had I beheld any thing offering such a disgusting picture of uncleanliness and discomfort as this abode; and its inhabitants were in perfect keeping with it.

The poor dear little boy was attired in a low-priced cotton dress, positively dirty; with a soiled and tattered lace cap, the remnant of former elegance, on his head; the face, pale and rigid, indicating that incipient disease had already assailed him, and his cries, or rather moans, were most painful to hear.

Lord Annandale was shocked.

"This is very dreadful!" said he; "would you believe it, Augusta, I thought, until we came here, that this poor little fellow was in a most comfortable residence, which this was described to me to be; and for which, my steward told me, a large rent was paid. And see how the poor little wretched boy is clad—positively like a beggar's child; notwithstanding this abominable nurse sends such bills for his wardrobe!"

I ordered some water to be made warm, and inquired for clean clothes, to dress the child.

"They be mostly all at the wash," replied the elder girl, opening a drawer from which she drew forth two nearly worn-out frocks and caps.

"No, they ben't at the wash," said the incorrigible younger girl; "mammy took 'em all with her to Lon'on to sell; the cross man made her."

"It's no such a thing!" exclaimed the elder, looking much embarrassed; "they're all at the wash."

I took the poor and much neglected child, and, having performed the necessary and long disused ablutions, dressed it as well as I could, this being my first attempt at any operation of the kind. Then, having sent one of the footmen for some Naples biscuits and milk, I succeeded in making a little panada, which the poor little fellow eagerly devoured. Wrapt in my shawl, and sleeping nearly all the time on my bosom, I brought the dear infant to London; and, when he opened his eyes, I was repaid, amply repaid, by a smile, and the quiescence with which I was permitted to kiss its pale mouth.

Lord Annandale, although shocked at the scene we had witnessed, appeared to forget his own share in the culpable neglect of his child, in the anger he betrayed against its wicked nurse. He fancied, that in allowing an unlimited sum for the support of his offspring, he was doing all that was required; never recollecting, that his profuseness encouraged the cupidity of the designing impostor to whom he confided it; and who, charging for luxuries the child never had, denied it the common comforts necessary for its preservation.

"You are very good to that poor little animal," said Lord Annandale, (how the word grated on my ears!) "but pray don't kiss it until it is purified from the disgusting atmosphere it has so lately left."

"I feel no disgust towards the dear infant," answered I, coldly.

"Ay, that may be, but that I do; and I don't wish to fancy your red lips and fair cheeks associated in any way with the impurities from which we snatched him."

I cannot tell you, Mary, how the gross selfishness of this speech shocked me.

I have had the nursery rendered as comfortable as possible; have secured a steady respectable woman as nurse, and bought a wardrobe for my little *protégé*. Already he begins to look quite a different being: and the doctor I have consulted for him says, the delicacy of his health arose only from neglect. How dreadful a subject for reflection! and yet, his father seems unconscious of his most culpable share in what might, and, as the doctor says, would have occasioned his child's death.

The dear little fellow knows me perfectly, evinces his joy when he sees me, by cooing, and holding out his tiny hands; and nestles his head in my bosom when they want to remove him from me. *I* can now look with less sadness on his dead mother's portrait; and I could almost fancy *it* also looked less sad. It is soothing to have something to love, some creature that depends on one for its happiness. This helpless innocent almost reconciles me to a destiny that will henceforth serve to render his less forlorn, and even a reflected happiness is not to be undervalued. I have been spoiled at home—home, dear and sacred name; how many fond associations does it recall! Not only did I form the source whence all the felicity of my dear farher and mother flowed, but they, every hour, every moment, made me sensible of this gratifying fact. Here I am lost, confounded with the crowd, hardly sensible of my own identity, now that it seems so little essential to the enjoyment of those around me. Lord Annandale's habits and pursuits have all been so long formed, and without reference to me, that I seem in no degree necessary to the routine of his pleasures. Political and social avocations fill

up so much of his time, as to leave little of it for domestic enjoyments, had he a taste for such, which I know is not the case. The feverish existence, so generally pursued here, is destructive to happiness. Married people are rendered so wholly independent of each other for society and companionship, that it is not to be wondered at, if they often forget the ties which bind, without attaching them. A man of fashion, I really believe, marries merely because a well-born and well-bred woman is considered a necessary appendage to his establishment, to do the honors of his house, and assist him in adding to its splendor. But a belief that his happiness depends on her, no more enters into his head, than if she stood in no near and dear relation to him. She is not the confidant of his secret thoughts, the soother of his troubles, or the sweetener of his hearth. No! she is an eligible person to share his dignities, and help to sustain them. She wears his family jewels, sits at the head of his table, gives him an heir to his honors, is polite and courteous to him and his friends—and he is satisfied. Whether *she* is, or is not, he never pauses to inquire. Nay, more, he would treat any indication of discontent as proof of a very unreasonable *exigeance*. What does she, what can she require? Has she not a brilliant position? This is the first essential in the catalogue of necessaries for happiness, in the estimation of the world in general, and of the male part of it in particular. Yet who, with a sensitive heart or elevated mind, ever attained felicity in it, unaided by the domestic affections? As well might it be supposed, that, because a woman is sparkling in diamonds of an inestimable price, she is happy. The brilliant position, like the glitter of the diamonds is only seen by others; the owner beholds not the lustre, though she is conscious of the weight. Has she not wealth to furnish every object that taste or fancy can desire, or luxury suggest? True; but did wealth ever yet yield happiness, unless he with whom it is shared gave zest to its enjoyment? As well offer gold instead of bread to a starving wretch in a wilderness, as imagine that riches can satisfy a heart pining for affection and sympathy. If I know myself, I think that, had I found my husband's happiness depended at all on me, I should have silenced the murmurs of my own heart to administer peace to his; but as it is—yet will I not despair, yes. I will cling to this new, this helpless object, that has none else but me to protect or cherish him, and endeavor to forget, in his welfare, the selfish regrets of a disappointed spirit. How happy are you, dearest Mary, in having found a partner for life whose purest source of enjoyment you constitute, and to whom your perpetual presence and soothing attentions are too necessary not to render even a temporary deprivation of them felt as a misfortune difficult to be borne, and their restoration impatiently desired!

Alas! I fear I must pray not to become your envious, instead of being, as now, your affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA ANNANDALE.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO THE MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

Me voici chère amie, in London, that imagined *Eldorado* of spinsters; where rich bachelors float on the surface of society, as fish do in rivers, to be caught by those who know how to lure them. But, though they frequently rise to the bait, and nibble sometimes, yet are they rarely hooked. Whether their escape proceeds from their wariness, or the unskilfulness of the angler, I have not yet had time to ascertain; but I mean to make the experiment, and you shall hear the result. I more than once feared, that after all, I should not come here; *madame ma tante* had so many scruples to be vanquished, and was so little disposed to yield any of them to my reasoning powers, of which, *entre nous*, she appears to entertain no very exalted opinion. I console myself for her humiliating depreciation of me, by the recollection that in proportion to the obtuseness of the mind acted upon, is the want of perception of the ability of the agency brought to bear against it. It is thus that our vanity offers a salve to the wounds inflicted on it. My aunt thought, forsooth, that Lady Annandale was too young to be a prudent chaperon for me. I ventured to suggest that I was old enough to be a prudent chaperon for her. This retort only produced a portentous shake of the head, and a—"I fear, Caroline, you have adopted habits and sentiments on the Continent totally at variance with our English notions of propriety; notions that render you a very unfit friend for one who ought to be wholly, purely, English."

"But, *ma chère tante*——"

"Call me aunt, in good plain English, Caroline; for your French aunts seem to

me to be very like comedy aunts, only brought on the stage to be duped or ridiculed, or both."

"Well, my dear aunt, in sober, sad English, why should you suppose that the feelings and notions on the Continent are at variance with those of England?"

"Because I have seen and heard of conduct in foreigners that I consider most objectionable; yet which, amongst them, excited no censure."

"That is to say, aunt, you heard no ill-natured animadversions on it. The tale was not whispered in every society, with all the exaggerations that malice can lend, until the whole story was changed, as would have been the case in England."

"Caroline, your depreciation of your own country is neither honorable to your judgment nor to your patriotism."

"And have you seen or heard of no conduct in English people that you considered most reprehensible?"

"Examples of such may exist, I grant; but they never fail to excite universal censure."

"Granted, my dear aunt; for the English are a very censorious nation. They love scandal as people do snuff: it excites them: but, when they have winked away, and whispered, and read away, in the scandal-vending papers, the reputations of half, if not all their friends, do they break off from them, and leave them alone, not in their glory, but in their notoriety? No such thing. They discover that poor Lady C—— had a very foolish husband, who never looked sufficiently strictly after her; and, therefore, she was more to be pitied than blamed for that *disagreeable affair*: this same said Lady C—— having a generous confiding husband, who, believing in her protestations of affection for him, never dreamed of her liking another, until her guilt was made universally known. He is generally censured: 'he ought to have suspected,'—'he must have known,'—'he was greatly to blame,' say all the world. And for what? that he loved, and trusted his wife. Then Lady D——, how deplorable her fate! With such a jealous, suspicious husband, was it to be wondered at, that the poor, dear soul fell into that sad scrape? Lord D—— was wholly in fault. If men will be so jealous, suspicious, and severe, they must put up with the consequences. Lord D—— is universally censured because he *did* look after his wife, yet could not save her; and this is the justice of society. Lady E——, whose bad conduct admits of no doubt, is found to be a most injured woman, because her husband is suspected of having liked Lady F——; as if an error in the husband's conduct could excuse that of the wife! The English can no more dispense with the scandalous papers on the Sabbath, than they can with going to church. One is, perhaps, considered a fit preparation for the other; for, as we are commanded to pray for all sinners, it is as well to know them, and their whereabout, *en detail*."

"Caroline, Caroline, that is a very improper mode of talking."

"A very improper mode of acting, I think you ought to say, my dear aunt. Now, on the Continent, there are no scandalous papers; no trials in the courts of law, to offer a *bonus* to the malice of discharged domestics, or to enable husbands to put into their purses the valuation affixed to the honor of their wives. Scandal is not there considered a necessary stimulant to the daily food, and almost as indispensable; the consequence of which is, that, if there exists as much immorality on the Continent, the proofs of it, with all the disgusting details, are not obtruded, to shock the old, and corrupt the young. And this, surely, is an advantage gained."

"I deny it, Caroline. As well might you assert, that, if a contagious disease is making its ravages unseen and unsuspected, it is less dangerous to a community, than when it is made known, and people are warned to avoid it."

"Then you, aunt, approve the trials to which I refer?"

"I must always, on general principles, approve a salutary severity, while I deplore its necessity. If an incurable gangrene attack a limb, I should advise its amputation: on the same system I should counsel a similar treatment of those members of the moral body, that I sanctioned in the physical one."

"Then you approve the odious exposures of conjugal infidelity?"

"The trials that too frequently occur in England, and on which you, Caroline, have commented with a degree of freedom and flippancy habitual only to women who have lived long out of this country, have one great moral effect which those who take a superficial view of the subject may overlook. I refer to the publicity and revolting details that accompany them; which are so appalling, that it is easy to believe, that the terror they inspire may have served to deter many a woman from conduct that might lead to such a re-

sult. A sense of shame is so inherent in the female heart, in which Providence, for its own wise purposes, has implanted it, that it often operates in enabling women successfully to combat and overcome a passion that might have triumphed over virtue. You may remember it is recorded that when suicides became so frequent among our sex, that numbers were every day committed, the only effectual mode found for arresting them, was by the enactment of a law, decreeing, that the persons of all women guilty of this fearful crime were to be publicly exposed. The sense of modesty and shame, stronger than the fear of death in woman's heart, stopped the mania. Are not the trials you alluded to, Caroline, a more shocking exposure? and may we not believe them to be an equally salutary preventive of crime?"

"But do you not think, aunt, that a husband ought to show some lenity to his wife, though she may have erred?"

"Why, surely, you could not expect a man of honor to sit tamely down with a wife who had violated hers? By so doing, he would become the tacit sanctioner of her guilt, and permit her pernicious example to sully the morals of his children."

"Will the exposure of her crime, with all its loathsome details, serve to preserve their morals, aunt?"

"Guilt *punished* is always less dangerous, as an example, than guilt tolerated."

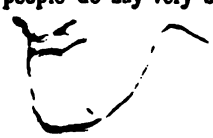
"Casuists might pronounce otherwise, aunt."

"I am no casuist, and wish you were less of one. But I repeat, that you have imbibed most erroneous opinions—all that you have now been stating is so wholly in contradiction to English feelings and notions, that I must again assert, that I consider you a very ineligible companion for so young and inexperienced a person as Lady Annandale."

I give you this stupid dialogue between my aunt and me, that you may enter into some of the peculiar characteristics of the English; one of which is, to believe themselves the most moral people in the world, while society teems with scandalous anecdotes, which, if only a quarter of them are true, would prove some portion of the upper classes to be the *least* moral in the world. Mr. So-and-So is openly talked of as the lover of Lady So-and-So, and invited wherever she visits. Many mothers would not hesitate to let her chaperon their daughters, and, if spoken to on the subject, would answer,—"Oh, yes, it is perfectly true; people do say very shocking things about poor Lady So-and-So; but every body receives her, and she gives *such* pleasant parties, and is such a *nice* person."

My dear compatriots are content to display their pretensions to morality, by censuring all who depart from its rules, rather than by an adherence to those rules themselves. And, having censured, they, like good mothers, receive back to their bosoms the children they have whipped, but not amended. Enough, however, of the English, *en masse*, for the present.

Now, for my friend Lady Annandale, who is the strangest person imaginable. Only fancy, she has taken it into her eccentric little head to conceive quite a passion for a pale sickly child of her husband's, eighteen months old; and as disagreeable as all children are at that age. *Le mari, pauvre homme*, seems quite flattered; though not a little *embêté*, by this caprice of his wife's; which, with the usual vanity peculiar to his sex, he attributes to her affection for him. She spends whole hours playing with and caressing this unhealthy little thing, and never seems so happy as when in its company. The evening I arrived, I found a chosen few of the *élite* of Annandale's friends were to dine here; but, judge of my agreeable surprise, when I saw the *comtesse*, *notre comtesse*, of Hohenlinden, enter. I had not written to apprise her of my intention of coming, so that she was as much surprised at the *rencontre* as I was. It was the first time of her seeing Lady Annandale; and she positively stood immoveable for a minute, so much was she struck by her extraordinary loveliness. If I can judge by the human countenance of what is passing within, I should say she was more astonished than delighted at the blaze of beauty that broke upon her; though she quickly recovered her *presence d'esprit*, and, embracing Lady Annandale *à la Française*, said she hoped that, as an old friend of Lord Annandale, and a still older friend of *la chérie* Caroline *Mon Tresor*, as she always calls me, *la belle* Lady Annandale would not consider her a stranger. The glance—half menace, half reproach—which *sa seigneurie* bestowed on Annandale, when she thought herself unobserved, unfolded their whole position, past and present, to me, as fully as if it had all been written in legible characters: and it was comical to see him, in order to conciliate *la comtesse*, looking as compunctious as possible for having wedded a lovely woman.



It strikes me that Lady Annandale is more beautiful than ever, and I can already perceive that she creates a wonderful sensation here. I can also perceive that *madame la comtesse* has been the love of Annandale, who has persuaded her, I'll be sworn, that his marriage was one of *convenance;* and she, who has vanity enough to believe all that administers to its gratification, has taken his statement *au pied de la lettre.* I fancy her saying to her friends, "*ce pauvre cher Annandale: il m'adore toujours, mais il est forcé de se marier, pauvre homme! Comme cela doit le chagriner elle n'est pas du tout jolie. Il m'a avoue, enfin qu'elle est bien laide, mais très rich.*" You fancy her repeating this to all her coterie—and then the brilliant beauty of Lady Annandale breaking on her without any preparation! I would not be *milord* at the next interview for something; as *notre frau grafinn* is apt to be energetic in her demonstrations of dissatisfaction, when deceived by any of her adorers.

She has not grown younger since we saw her last; *au contraire,* she looks hagard and *fanée;* but all that she loses in natural charms she endeavors to supply by artificial substitutes, and resembles a piece of mosaic well put together. I, rather spitefully talked of some of her admirers at Vienna; and in that tone of badinage in which you have sometimes flattered me I excel. See looked abashed for she has, I conclude, been persuading Annandale that he alone has ever stood high in her good graces. I can perceive that it is the fashion attached to her position, and not her charms, which has won his homage; but this is not a rare occurrence here, Englishmen being more vain of the preference of a *dame à la mode,* however plain than of that of the most perfect beauty who is not *en vogue.* What a contrast is there between the young and blooming Augusta, with her sylph-like figure, graceful movements, and sparkling countenance, and this mature Teutonic Calypso!

La comtesse affects a *grande tendresse* for me; so I conclude that she wishes to make use of me in some way or other: we shall see by and by. The *laissez-aller* of her manners seemed to astonish more than please Lady Annandale, who drew up with an air of offended dignity, very like that usually resorted to, on similar occasions, by her prudish friend, Lady Delaward. *Notre frau grafinn* was, however, quite insensible to this assumption of matronly decorum;—she regards as little as ever the opinions which others may entertain respecting her. I think, that to this open and contemptuous indifference as to whether she conciliates their esteem or respects their prejudices, she owes her popularity with my compatriots; who are in general prone to yield their suffrages to those candidates who appear the least eager to obtain them. Of that unreformed borough, "good society," the most effective members are often those who are the most independent of the electors. *La comtesse* is, consequently, at the head of the most fashionable, if not reputable circle. Pleasure is the order of the day, which they enter into, here, with a business like sort of perseverance in the pursuit, that proves they have indefatigable energies, if not wisdom. Amusement (as our social efforts to repel the enemy *ennui* are conventionally denominated,) which on the Continent is partaken of gaily and airily, is here a very serious affair; and laboriously occupies the attention of those, who, in place of abandoning themselves to it with the cheerfulness of foreigners, pursue it much as sportsmen do a fox, with no little risk, and still less enjoyment.

But, on all these subjects, I shall soon be able to make you *au fait,* as I intend to study them, *con amore,* and give you the benefit of my observation. Adieu, *chère amie; dites mille choses pour moi au marquis.*

Votre CAROLINE.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I LEFT the Delawards with regret, and arrived here, three days ago. I found all all London, by which I mean the clubs and society raving of the beauty of Lady Annandale, *qui fait fureur.* I attended the drawing-room yesterday, and saw her presented. Every eye was upon her, and every tongue loud in her praise; that is, every male tongue; for the ladies wondered what induced people to make such a fuss about her—*they* saw nothing so very wonderful in her. Miss Montressor was also presented; and, had she not been near Lady Annandale, would have been admired, for she looked extremely well. To the generality of persons she must appear a very handsome woman. Her figure is graceful and symmetrical, and her features peculiarly regular and *distingué;* but the expression of her countenance is to me

extremely disagreeable; for it has that hardness which belongs exclusively to persons whose thoughts had never risen above the passions and feelings of the worldly minded and calculating; a character quite the reverse of what I like to see in a female face. Miss Montressor seems perfectly aware of the value of all the advantages she possesses in her present position, and determined to avail herself to the utmost of them. She affects to treat Lady Annandale as a spoiled child over whom she has unbounded influence, and Annandale as a chosen friend. From the good understanding that seems to subsist between Lady Annandale and her, I conclude she has contrived to exculpate herself from the charge made against her honor. To effect this was easy, with so unexperienced a person as Lady Annandale, who would be likely to redouble her kindness towards her, if led to believe her unjustly accused. Her intimacy with the Comtesse Hohenlinden offers an excuse for drawing that lady perpetually to Lady Annandale's whom she votes her *amie de cœur*, a title to which Annandale is much better entitled.

Last night there was a brilliant reception at Delafield House; and again Lady Annandale shone the brightest star of the evening. I had no idea of the beauty of this lovely creature until I saw her on this occasion; for, in the country, during the three days I passed beneath the same roof with her, she was so *triste* and abstracted, her eyes so dimmed by tears, and her cheeks so pale, that though I was conscious that she was beautiful in spite of all these counteracting circumstances, still I was not prepared for the blaze of loveliness which she presented on the evening to which I am now referring.

She displays a degree of kindness, indeed, I might say cordiality, towards me, that is very agreeable, and would be extremely flattering if I could attribute even a portion of it to any implied sense of my own merit; but I know I owe to it the favorable opinion the Delawards are so kind as to entertain of me, and the good natured commendations of Lord and Lady Vernon, who overrate the attention I paid them in the country. Annandale has solicited me to conduct his wife through the routes and *soirées*, when we meet, while he divides his attentions between the Comtesse Hohenlinden, and Miss Montressor. He is elated at the sensation Lady Annandale has created; and more than ever a slave to that artificial world, to which the possession of a treasure such as that he owns ought to render him utterly indifferent.

I was interrupted yesterday before I had time to finish this dull epistle; and now resume my pen to add a few lines. I dined yesterday at Annandale's, with only a few persons of *haut ton;* consisting of ladies whose reputations are more fashionable than respectable, and of men whose morality is of that stamp which renders them the last persons a sensible person would select as his guests at a table where so young and lovely a woman presided. The Comtesse Hohenlinden came in the evening followed by some of her adorers, whose attentions to her were marked rather by warmth than respect. Her demoralising example seems to have withdrawn all reserve from the ladies who form her coterie, for each was occupied exclusively by the favorite beau of the season. In short, "lovers were all they ought to be, and husbands not the least alarmed." Lady Annandale was the only woman in the room ignorant of the exact relative positions of all the parties; but Miss Montressor penetrated the whole at a glance, as I could perceive by the significant looks she exchanged with the comtesse.

Already has Lady Annandale become the object of marked attention of more than one of the young *roués* of fashion who hover round her, mingling compliments on her beauty with *piquant* anecdotes of most of the ladies present.

"Observe," said Lord Henry Mercer, "how angry Lady Harlestone looks: she is jealous of the Comtesse Hohenlinden, with whom she has discovered Charles Fitzhardinge has been flirting during her absence at Paris."

"And what right has she to be jealous of that?" asked Lady Annandale, looking as guileless and as innocent as—she is.

This question produced a smile from Lord Henry who answered it by saying, "Your ladyship is the only person in London, or at least, in our circle that could require to be informed *why;* for every one knows that Charles Fitzhardinge has been the adorer of Lady Harlestone ever since she gave George Seymour his *congé*."

"Oh! I thought Lady Harlestone was a married woman," replied Lady Annandale with *naïveté*.

This produced more than a smile, for the two coxcombs who heard it, laughed downright.

"And what does your ladyship suppose she now is?" asked Lord Henry.

"A widow, of course," was the answer.

This gave rise to another laugh, and Lady Annandale appeared embarrassed. I changed the subject, and engaged her in a conversation relative to the Delawards, and her father and mother—two themes that never fail to interest her sufficiently to withdraw her attention from all others; and the two *beaux* walked away, voting, I dare be sworn, Lady Annandale a fool, or, at least, not far removed from that condition. I saw them go to the Comtesse Hohenlinden; and, from her laughter, and the looks cast at Lady Annandale, they were, I am sure, relating to her the simplicity, or as they would most probably term it, the *bêtise de la beauté*.

The comtesse, with that vanity and spirit of coquetry which characterise her, appears now determined to exhibit Annandale as being more than ever the slave of her charms. She thinks that this is the only way of proving their power to the world; and she goes about hanging on his arm, and positively affecting to display the *tendresse* she *affiches* him to entertain for her. His vanity is quite equal to hers; and, to have the credit of making her dismiss one or two of the pretenders to her favor, he is capable of compromising himself, and behaving *ill* to Lady Annandale. Already he presumes to treat her with a *nonchalance* which, if it does not amount to ill breeding, is, at least, far removed from that respectful attention which every man owes to his wife; and, short as has been their *séjour* in town, people already begin to comment on his being what they call "so fashionable" a husband.

An observation of Lady Annandale had so much innocence in it, that I was glad no one heard it but myself, conscious as I am of the evil interpretations to which it would subject her.

"I scarcely know the persons around me," said she. "How happy they all seem, and how deeply occupied with each other! It is pleasant to see married people so much attached; though, I confess, I prefer witnessing that delicate and respectful attention, which distinguishes Lord Delaward's manner towards his wife to the familiarity, affectionate as it appears, of the gentlemen around us to theirs. And yet, it surprises me too; for Lord Annandale told me, that in society it was not customary for men to sit by their wives, or to walk about with them, but the persons around us, never quit each other."

If this innocent speech were promulgated, Lady Annandale would be ridiculed by every man and woman of fashion, and set down as a perfect *imbécile: you* would judge differently, as does your friend,

NOTTINGHAM.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

You ask me for news, *chère* Caroline, but you forget that news, like money, is not always forth-coming when demanded. Have you never observed how blank people look when either is required of them? Such is now my case, as yonder mirror, on which my eyes have just glanced *par hasard*, assured me. *Voyons!* what shall I tell you? Conspiracies are so common, that they cease to interest any but the plotters, the plotted against, and the police; changes of minstry few care about, except *les agents de change; et quant aux modes*, Herbault tells me, they arrive in London three days after they see the light here.

En vérité, I know nothing worthy of repetition, unless it be an occurrence which has recently excited the attention of all the *salons* in Paris. People talk of nothing else, and half-a-dozen versions, at least, are given of it. It is rather a long affair; but, as it has its points of interest, I think I will undertake its narration, and endeavor to serve it up to you in the regular "*Contes Moraux*" style.

You did not, I believe, know Monsieur and Madame de St. Armand. Yet you must have seen them, too, as they visited at some of the houses of our acquaintance, and the heroine of the *histoire* was too handsome not to be remarked. But, to my story. Once upon a time, then, the said Monsieur et Madame de St. Armand were considered a juvenile Baucis and Philemon, and were cited by all who knew them as one of the happiest couples in Paris. Their affection, and the good understanding subsisting between them, were invariably quoted as examples in every *ménage;* (what a pity, *par parenthèse*, it is, that people are more prone to quote good examples, than to follow them! *n'est-ce pas?*) and though Jules de St. Armand's uxoriousness, and deference to his wife's opinions, were sometimes ridiculed by the Benedicts of his circle, or the *garçons* who boasted their fredom from female influence, still it seemed generally allowed that he was as happy as even the most attached of his friends could desire him to be.

Jules and Alicia de St. Armand had been married two years at the period to which I am now referring. Their union had arisen solely in affection, and the time which had elapsed since its occurrence had only served to increase their mutual attachment. To great personal beauty, both joined considerable talents; consequently, they were eminently calculated to shine in the *réunions* of the circle to which they belonged; but they found themselves so happy in the home which their love embellished, that they scarcely ever voluntarily entered into society.

Every husband who thought his wife too fond of balls and *soirées*, dwelt, with warm commendations, upon the domestic taste and habits of Madame de St. Armand; and every wife who felt dissatisfied with the dissipation of her *caro sposo*, quoted M. de St. Armand as a model for husbands. The natural consequences ensued. The wives with propensities to gaiety began to look with aversion on Alicia; and those husbands who liked all other places better than home quickly conceived an unfriendly sentiment towards Jules. This antipathy, however, might have been as transitory as it was sudden, had it not been increased and established by the imprudent and enthusiastic praises of the friends and relatives of the exemplary couple.

And now, more than one married *belle*, who was to be seen continually at all public places, and rarely *chez elle*, was heard to observe, that it was quite ridiculous in Madame de St. Armand to set herself up to be wiser and happier than her neighbors; and that such an attempt could only be made in the peevish vanity of seeking to oppose and displease all her friends and acquaintance. Several of the men, too, who found more attractions in other women than in their own wives, spoke with affected contempt, of St. Armand's hypocritical assumption of the *rôle* of a pattern husband, and of his ostentatious abandonment of society to act *le bon mari* at home. To pretend to be *better* than one's acquaintance, is always considered as a piece of impertinence that demands correction; but to pretend to be *happier*, is an offence never pardoned. *Mari et femme* were viewed as thus offending, and those who so considered them determined on avenging themselves.

Little did the St. Armands imagine that, while they were enjoying the pure happiness which congenial minds experience in a domestic life, their tranquil felicity and retired habits were exciting the hatred of those whom they had never injured. Had this fact been communicated to them, they would have disbelieved it; for both were unacquainted with the ill-nature of worldly minds, and the wanton and atrocious calumnies which the spirit of rancor engenders.

The rarity of Madame de St. Armand's appearance in society rendered her beauty still more impressive whenever she was seen; and even women who were, perhaps, really lovelier, ceased to attract their wonted degree of admiration when she was present; solely because the beholders were habituated to *their* charms, while *hers* were invested with all the additional grace of novelty. This success only increased the acerbity of those who were already but too well inclined to be hostile to her, any they anxiously awaited an opportunity of injuring and humiliating her.

At this period a ball was given by an aunt of M. de St. Armand, at which she insisted that my conjugal and exemplary pair should attend. Aware of this circumstance, some of the most mischievous of their acquaintance hoped to profit by it, and to arrange a plot which would occasion them dissension and mortification.

A M. de Melfort had been an unsuccessful suitor for the hand of Alicia St. Armand, the year previously to her union with Jules; and had felt so much grieved by her rejection of him, that he fled to Italy, whence he only returned a few days prior to the celebration of the memorable ball to which I have been alluding. His return had revived the recollection of his former attachment, and people wondered whether he could behold his former flame, now a wedded dame, without emotion; while others were equally anxious to learn how St. Armand would treat his wife's former admirer.

A few of the most malicious of the ladies who bore my unlucky heroine so much ill-will, were assembled in the *boudoir* of one of the *clique*, two days before the intended *fête:* when, the subject of M. de Melfort's return having been introduced, Madame de Chatannes proposed to *mystify*, as she designated her insidious project, "the affected prude;" and another, equally spiteful, suggested the practice of a similar mystification with regard to M. de St. Armand.

Various were the plans furnished by each of the ladies, who displayed a most laudable invention and rivalry on the occasion. At length, it was agreed that Madame Fontanges, who was chosen on ac-

count of her not being an acquaintance of the St. Armands, should be the person to put the following plot into execution.

The lady was to narrowly watch my hero and heroine; and, in case of their being separated during the ball, she was to approach close to Alicia, and, after asking an accomplice to point out to her Madame de St. Armand, to state that she experienced for her the utmost interest and pity, in consequence of her discovery of the craft and falsity of M. de St. Armand; who, while basely pretending to only adore his unfortunate wife, was the devoted lover of an artful and most wicked person. This verbal poison was to be delivered loud enough for Alicia to hear it; and, if it should produce the anticipated effect upon her countenance, the skilful calumniator was then to pass near the husband, and observe how very embarrassed and agitated Madame de St. Armand appeared, in consequence of the presence of M. de Melfort, for whom she evidently retained all her old *tendresse*.

Can you not fancy the delight with which this malicious *clique* would concoct this amiable plan? I think I can see them revelling in all the ecstacy which the expectation of its success would occasion them; and experiencing an almost insupportable impatience to inflict a deadly wound upon the peace of two persons who had never injured them, even in thought.

Eight and forty hours elapsed, and the evening of the ball arrived. Alicia and Jules sat at their dessert: and, as the wind whistled, and the sleet beat against the windows, both wished that they were not compelled to abandon their cheerful and happy fireside to mingle in scenes which no longer possessed any attractions for them.

"I never felt so reluctant to leave home, dearest Jules," said Alicia, "as I do this evening."

"And I, also," he replied, "would infinitely prefer the society of our own household gods, and your comfortable *bergères*, to my aunt's splendid *salons*, and all her gay company. But, *hélas!* we must go; and you, dearest, must do honor to the ball by wearing your diamonds, the ornaments to which I am least partial, because they are more calculated to excite the admiration of others, than that of a husband. Consequently, I am more than half jealous of them—as I am, indeed, of all your *grandes toilettes;* for, in my opinion, they attract a too general attention. I like you best, Alicia, in your simple home-dress with the pink ribands (which I know are worn to please me;) and when no other eye than mine can rest on your loveliness."

"And I, as you are well aware," Alicia replied, "dress only to please you, and am regardless of all other approbation."

"Yet, I confess," resumed Jules, "that, when I see you the object of general admiration, I have not philosophy enough to resist feeling proud; though I should be less satisfied if you appeared elated by your triumph, for I should be disposed to jealousy if you were the least coquettishly inclined."

"No! nothing could make me believe that you *could* be jealous, dearest," said Alicia: "but I am not so confident of myself; for I am sure that, if I saw you paying the same attention to any woman that some of the married men of our acquaintance do, I should be very miserable."

As she thus spoke, an expression of seriousness, almost amounting to pain, stole over her beautiful face.

"You will, then, never be miserable, dearest Alicia," replied Jules, kissing her cheek; "for I am as particular in my notions of what a husband's conduct ought to be, as I am scrupulous about a wife's. But," he added, as he looked at the *pendule*, "it is time to begin to dress. Would that the ball had ended, and that we were returned, to find, as we always do, that there is nothing like home."

You see, my dear Caroline, that I am attempting to fulfil the promise which I made in the commencement of my story; and am serving up to you my *facts* in a most *fiction-like* shape. But I am not *sure* that I have *not* some talent for scribbling; and I am now, therefore, resolved to determine my surmise.

Never did Madame de St. Armand look more beautiful than on this evening; and, as I was present, I can give no dubious opinion on the subject. While she passed through the crowded suite of rooms, murmurs of approbation followed her. Her husband enjoyed the admiration she excited; and, as his aunt whispered into his ear that Alicia was the most brilliant ornament of her *salons*, he smiled a grateful assent.

The enemies of Madame de St. Armand were, of course, rendered doubly malicious by her pre-eminence, and even the unaffected modesty with which she seemed rather to shun than to court admiration, added to their hostility.

Alicia was in conversation with a lady

whom her aunt had presented to her, when she heard her own name mentioned, and Madame de Fontanges repeat the preconcerted falsehood; every syllable of which fell on her ears as the death-knell of her happiness. She turned pale as marble, and was seized with a violent fit of trembling; but the necessity of concealing her emotion from her companion, was still predominant in her mind. The effort, however, to repress it, exceeded her strength; and she was almost sinking on the floor, when St. Armand approached her, and, placing her on a seat, sternly interrogated her as to the cause of her indisposition.

Never before had a word or a look verging upon severity been addressed to her by her husband; and the alteration in his manner struck the silly girl as a sort of confirmation of the statement she had heard. Her sufferings and agitation, consequently, increased to such a degree, that he was obliged to lead her from the ball-room, to the delight and triumph of her enemies, who had been gratified spectators of the whole scene.

When Madame de Fontanges had poured her venomed words into the ear of Madame de St. Armand, she had sought her husband; and, turning her back towards him, repeated, as if ignorant of his vicinity, the concocted story relative to M. de Melfort's presence producing such intense agitation in Madame de St. Armand. The credulous and suspicious Jules, wounded to the heart by this imputation, though still half discrediting it, hastily sought his wife; and found a seeming confirmation of the calumny in her pallid face and disturbed demeanor.

Her illness, which, on any other occasion, would have excited in him the liveliest interest and pity, and elicited the most tender demonstrations of tenderness, now only produced an ungovernable rage; every symptom of which only served to corroborate, in the poisoned mind of the foolish little dupe, the truth of the statement she had heard. After a long and violent paroxysm of tears, which he witnessed with indignation, he demanded of her *whom* she had seen, and *whose* presence had had the power to create in her so violent an emotion. She replied that she had seen no one whose presence was capable of producing such an effect. This answer made him still more infuriated.

"Do you mean to affirm," he exclaimed, with much violence, "that you have not beheld M. de Melfort?"

"Certainly not," she rejoined, much astonished by the question.

Unhappily, however, Jules had observed the object of his wrathful interrogation leaving the part of the *salon* in which he had found his wife; and so near to her, that it seemed impossible that she could not have seen him. Consequently, believing that she was now deliberately uttering a falsehood, the wrath of the jealous creature became unbounded. Partially, however, repressing its indulgence, he withdrew from the ball-room: and conducted her back to the home, the late happy home, that, only two hours before, they had left with unruffled minds and loving hearts.

They scarcely spoke during their drive, for both were a prey to the most painful emotions. Alicia wept with bitterness, as the *past* returned to her memory in mournful contrast with the altered *present;* and her tears and sobs only served to increase the anger of her excited husband. This violence prevented her from repeating to him the conversation she had overheard; for his changed manner and unprecedented severity seemed to confirm the fearful calumny; and she shrank from the idea of exposing her wounded feelings to one who appeared only to regard her agony with vindictive malice.

Both retired to sleepless pillows, tortured by the fiend, jealousy, which now awoke in their hearts for the first time, inflicting pangs known only to those who have fondly loved and trusted—and been betrayed.

But, I really believe, I am attempting the sentimental! And my fingers ache, and my eyes are blinded, and my head is dizzy, and I have already disfigured enough paper to fill the ambassador's bag, even if it were a sack: I must, therefore, reserve for another letter the continuation of my tale. Adieu then, *chère* Caroline, and believe me,

Votre amie dévouée,

DELPHINE, MARQUESE DE VILLEROI.

FROM THE MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

MY CHERE CAROLINE:—As I have not much time or space to spare, I will resume my *conte moral* without any prelude; venturing to believe that you are under the influence of my literary spell, and are dy-

ing to learn the *dénoûment* of the narrative which, I flatter myself, I have hitherto conducted and developed with so much ability.

On the following morning, Alicia left her couch pale and suffering; her eyes swollen with tears and want of sleep, and her languid limbs scarcely able to support her exhausted frame. She hoped to find her husband more kindly disposed towards her than the night before; and determined to communicate to him the cause of the emotion which seemed to have excited his anger.

She repaired to him in the library; but his looks revealed even an increase of sullenness, and the words of conciliation with which she had proposed to greet him, instantly died on her lips.

At this moment, a servant entered with letters for them both; when, for the first time since their marriage, each was anxious to watch the effect which the perusal would produce upon the other. Alicia, having looked at the superscription of hers, and recognised the hand of one of her female acquaintance, laid it upon the table unopened; and fixed her scrutinising gaze on the countenance of her husband, who seemed, however, totally regardless of her observation, so intense was the evidently painful interest which his letter had instantly excited in him. He changed color, his eyes flashed with rage, and his livid lips trembled convulsively, as he refolded the mysterious source of this strange and sudden paroxysm, and carefully deposited it in his pocket. Then, turning to his perplexed and agitated wife, he exclaimed, in a most angry and imperious tone,

"*Why* have you not read your letter? Is it that you wish to reserve its contents for the privacy of your own chamber?"

"You, it appears," replied Alicia, maddened by jealousy, "could not restrain *your* impatience until an equally fitting opportunity; and the words of your correspondent, whoever *she* may be, seem to have affected you to a degree which I should once have deemed impossible."

Jules looked at her with indignation flashing from every feature; and, snatching up her letter, sneeringly demanded whether she had any objection to his perusal of it. Alicia promptly replied in the negative, somewhat appeased by a request which she thought would justify her in addressing a similar one to him.

He tore open the seal: but had not read ten lines, before he frantically threw the treacherous paper upon the table, and rushed wildly from her presence; leaving her both astonished and terrified by his singular conduct. In the hope of resolving her doubts, tremblingly and anxiously she seized the pernicious sheet which had produced such fatal effects, and hurriedly read the following mystification:

"*Ma chère amie:*

"We were all *au désespoir* at your sudden indisposition last night; but your old adorer, M. de Melfort was still more affected than any of us; another instance of fidelity, which again proves the truth of the old song,

'Qu'on revient toujours
A ses premiers amours.'

"The poor man looked so disconsolate when you withdrew, that we were compelled in charity to do all we could to cheer him. I hope that you are better to-day; and that you will always believe in the attachment of

"Your devoted friend,

"MARIA L'ESTRANGE."

This note conveyed to Madame de St. Armand the first intimation of M. de Melfort's return to France; a circumstance, however, which was so perfectly indifferent to her, that she looked upon this announcement of it merely as a *mouvaise plaisanterie* of Madame de L'Estrange, a species of amusement in which that lady delighted. It was, however, evident, that this foolish jest, as she supposed it to be, had offended Jules; and, gratified at the idea that he still loved her sufficiently to be jealous, she left the room to seek him, and avow all that had shocked and grieved her during the last few hours.

He was nowhere to be found; but, on the table in her boudoir, she observed a twisted billet containing a few hurried lines, stating that he should not dine at home, and would not return till very late. Poor Alicia burst into tears while she perused this frigid announcement of an absence which would endure for several hours. And *where* was he gone? Jealousy answered the question, and darted its fiery fangs to her heart, as the thought struck her, that even in that very moment, perhaps he was with her rival, and lavishing upon her those endearing affections which had been hitherto all her own, and were the sole base of her happiness.

She had half resolved to set forth in pursuit of him, when the recollection of her ignorance of both the person and abode

of her rival arrested her. *Her* rival! what bitterness was in the thought of this hateful person! and the gentle, the hitherto reasonable Alicia, who a few hours before, had never experienced an angry passion, now felt her very temples bursting, and her respiration impeded almost to suffocation, by jealous rage and disappointed affection.

At this moment, her *femme de charge* entered, as was her usual custom, to present the *ménu* for dinner, and receive her mistress' orders; when the agitated Madame St. Armand was obliged to quell her emotions, and assume an air of unconcern.

"I have prepared the soup, and the *poularde au jus*, for monsieur, as madame commanded yesterday," said the housekeeper; "and I think it will please him."

These few words brought a train of reflections, now fraught with bitterness, to the mind of Alicia. It was only the previous morning, that, anxious to please her husband, she had ordered his favored *plat* for the dinner of the following day. How happy did she feel in expressing this desire! and now, though but so few hours had elapsed, what a dreadful change had occurred in her position and sentiments, and what intensity of wretchedness had she not endured in that brief interval!

She could scarcely assume sufficient composure to tell the *femme de charge* that M. de St. Armand would not dine at home; and that, as she herself was rather unwell, she should only require a little *bouillon*. The expression of surprise in the woman's face awakened her mistress to a sense of her indiscretion in avowing her indisposition at the same moment that she announced her husband's absence: and she felt embarrassed as she remarked the curiosity which she appeared to have excited.

Who has not experienced the misery of being compelled to assume an air of unconcern in the presence of importunate visiters or servants, when some painful *contretems*, which we are necessitated to conceal, has occurred? In spite of, to adopt the expression of one of your poets, "*our* matchless intrepidity of face," even you and I, *ma chère* Caroline, have, ere now, endured this vexatious species of trial with something very like discomposure, if not confusion.

Fancy then how such a sentimental creature as my heroine must have suffered under those circumstances; she who had never hitherto been compelled to conceal her slightest emotion. Yet now, while undergoing the fiercest pangs of jealousy, which shook her frame and agonised her heart, she had the additional mortification of feeling that she and her husband would become the subject of the impertinent curiosity and remarks of their own menials; a bitter and humiliating thought, before which her pride and delicacy shrank in sensitive alarm.

Do not accuse *me* of sentimentality, if I observe that it is almost incredible how painfully minor ills can make themselves felt, even in the very moment when we are enduring great and overwhelming afflictions. The power of weeping in entire secrecy, all access debarred to prying curiosity, or coarse sympathy which but aggravates the sorrow it would soothe, is in itself a source of alleviation; but the necessity of wearing the semblance of tranquillity when the heart is breaking, to elude the vigilant eye of plebeian inquisitiveness, is alone a heavy suffering.

Remember this remark is made in my *métier* of author; and you must not consider it at all a representation of my own sentiments.

Every thing in the room where Alicia was seated reminded her of Jules. All that it contained were his gifts, and endeared to her by a thousand fond recollections. The book he had been reading to her the day before, while she sat at her embroidery, was still on the table, with a mark upon it, to indicate the place where he had terminated; and the bouquet he had brought to her, was still fresh in the vase where he had placed it. As her eyes rested on each object indicative of his tenderness, she asked herself, whether it was possible that he could always have been deceiving her; and that, while he seemed to be only occupied in lavishing tokens of affection on her, he was in reality wholly devoted to another? Her heart answered, No! Her feelings became softened by the recollection of all his delicate and incessant attentions; and she wept with much less bitterness than before, as hope whispered, that he who had hitherto so loved her, could not, in a few brief hours, be permanently and irremediably changed.

A letter was brought to her; and, for an instant, her bosom throbbed with joy, as she thought it might come from Jules, who, repenting of his severity, had written to acquaint her with his altered feelings. But, alas! the characters were not his; and, with indifference, she then unfolded the sheet.

Soon, however, its contents engrossed her liveliest attention. It was anonymous;

and it stated that pity for her, and a desire of investing her with the power of reclaiming her unfaithful husband, induced the writer to address her. The attachment of M. St. Armand for another had, the writer asserted, long been notorious to his friends, who were of opinion that his wife's ignorance on the subject stimulated him to continue his vicious course. But, were he once detected in his duplicity, repentance and shame might induce him to lead an altered life, and return to his domestic duties.

The anonymous writer added, that Mons. Armand was to meet the object of his affection that night, at the *bal masqué* at the opera; and that the lady was to be dressed in a pink domino, and was to stand close to the orchestra, on the left side. At eleven o'clock, she was to hold up a bouquet, which was to be the signal, concerted between her and her lover, of her emancipation from all *espionage*, and that he was then immediately to join her.

The letter then stated, that if Madame St. Armand, disguised in a similar way, stationed herself near the appointed spot, and made the concerted signal, her husband would approach, mistaking her for the object of his passion; when she might suffer him to conduct her to a box, and there, disclosing herself, overwhelm him with shame and contrition.

Various and violent were the conflicting feelings that shook the frame of the jealous and credulous Alicia while reading this artful concoction of the malicious junta. Could she venture to repair to such a scene of levity, and place her husband in the humiliating position the writer recommended? No! she would herself rather endure any agony, than adopt so daring and unfeminine a course.

But then came the reflection, that, if she disobeyed the information she had received, her rival—her hateful, hated rival—would meet *her* husband, would hang on *his* arm, and tranquilly and happily listen to those expressions of fascinating endearment to which she alone was entitled! This thought was omnipotent; and, maddened by jealous rage, she resolved to adopt the advice of her unknown correspondent.

Her determination became confirmed, as she recollected how many times she had heard her husband censure this licentious species of amusement, and speak in terms of indignant condemnation of those females who resorted to it.

"Yes," thought Alicia, with bitterness, "he may well reprobate the attendance of wives at such scenes. Their presence might be very embarrassing to husbands such as he, who, breaking through every tie of love and duty, convert the immorality they so basely affect to loathe, into the means of sustaining their intercourse with the infamous objects of their guilty caprices. But *I*, too, will be there; and, at least, prevent him from meeting the vile woman who has corrupted him. Oh! that I should live to suffer this indignity!"

Her head throbbed, and her brain seemed on fire. She was incapable of reflection; for the mingled passions of love and jealousy assumed the entire dominion of her troubled mind, and silenced every incipient whisper of reason.

Do not fancy this description too highly colored, Caroline; for "I, too, was an Arcadian,"—I once felt this, or something very like it. But it was two months, not two years, after my marriage.

She ordered her carriage, and drove to a shop that furnished masks and dominoes; and, having procured one of the latter which was exactly similar to that described in the anonymous letter, she returned to her residence, trembling with impatience and anxiety to encounter her husband.

The letter which had produced so much impression on Jules in the morning, was also anonymous; and, under the plea of pity for his position, as an injured and deceived husband, informed him that Madame St. Armand had, the night before, promised her old lover, M. de Melfort, that she would meet him at the *bal masqué* at the opera, provided she could elude the vigilance of her jealous husband. The writer, therefore, cautioned M. St. Armand, that, if he wished to preserve his honor, he must not leave his wife's presence tho whole of that day and night; but, if he preferred to detect her in the guilt, he had only to plead an engagement abroad, and proceed to the Opera House, where he would have ocular demonstration of her perfidy. The dress Madame St. Armand was to wear was accurately described; but *twelve* o'clock was the hour named for her meeting with her lover.

The first impulse of the angry husband was to charge his wife with her intended assignation; but then came the recollection, that she might as unblushingly deny this imputation, as she had, the night before, denied that of having seen M. de Melfort, though he himself had beheld him withdrawing from her presence. No! he could

no longer place reliance on her veracity and therefore it were fruitless to accuse her, and urge her to endeavor to establish her innocence, when her asseverations could be productive of no diminution of his suspicions.

He next resolved to watch her narrowly, during the whole day and evening, and thus prevent her from leaving the house. But soon it occurred to him—and jealous wrath instigated the thought—that the better course would be to detect her in the moment of meeting with her lover; and spurn her at once from his home and heart, instead of continuing to endure an endless life of uncertainty, suspicion, and misery.

The last feeling became ultimately predominant; and, instigated by it, he left the house, and concealed himself in a *café* in the vicinity, whence he could watch his own house. No sooner, therefore, did his wife's carriage issue from the gates, than he jumped into a cabriolet, and followed in her path. He *hoped* that she was going to visit some of her relations; though her leaving home at all, after the agitation and illness of the previous night, their mutual coldness and petulance of the morning, and their final separation in anger, seemed a confirmation of his worst fears.

He was not long in suspense; for her carriage shortly stopped at the door of a masquerade warehouse, where he saw her descend, her face concealed in her veil, and her person enveloped and disguised in a large mantle. So ungovernable was his rage at this apparent proof of her guilt, that he could scarcely resist his desire to enter the shop and overwhelm her with his reproaches. But, with a violent effort, he subdued the tempting impulse, and resolved ——

But, *ma chère* Caroline, I do not know whether I shall ever communicate to you what he *did* resolve. Here am I toiling like an author in an attic to please you; and I now recollect that you have never yet told me that you experience the slightest interest in my labors. This assurance, however, I must have, ere you receive another line from

Your affectionate friend,

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

P. S. To bribe you into applauding me, and into professing curiosity, even if you have not yet entertained it, I must warn you, that the best part of my tale is untold. You see I already experience an author's vanity in my vocation.

THE MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

MA CHERE CAROLINE:—Of course, I shall believe your protestations: I find in myself such an invincible craving for your approbation, that never was a person more disposed to be duped. Resolving therefore, to be convinced that your profession of the interest which my tale deserves, and has excited, &c., is all pre-eminently sincere, I will now proceed to detail to you the catastrophe.

My last letter terminated with my announcement of Jules's formation of a resolution, which, with truly literary tact, I piquantly forbore to declare. This resolution, was to master his present temptation to an imperfect retribution; but, by postponing it, to render it more thorough and complete.

In this determination, he entered the warehouse as soon as his wife had left it; and having provided himself with a mask and domino, such as were described in the anonymous letter, he retired to a *restaurant* in the vicinity of the Opera House there, to await, in trembling impatience, the moment which was to convict his wife of indelible guilt, and blight eternally his own happiness.

Every softer feeling was banished from his breast; every recollection of past tenderness only added to his rage, by compelling him to contrast his present convictions of her falsity and guilt, with his former notions of her purity and innocence. How fondly, how madly had he idolised her! and how many instances of her devoted attachment, which, only a few hours before, had they recurred to him, would have been meditated on, and cherished with transport and pride, were now only regarded by him as proofs of her skilful artifice and consummate treachery.

The envious and rancorous women who planned the savage plot which I have been detailing, scarcely hoped that it could prove successful. They feared that the timidity of Madame St. Armand's nature would preclude her, at least, from going to *bal masqué*, though they expected that her husband might be tempted to adopt their mischievous advice. In order, therefore, that he, at all events, might be imposed upon, they dressed the *femme de chambre* of one of the *clique* in a pink domino, and instructed her to place herself near the orchestra at the appointed hour, and give the concerted signal.

They also wrote an anonymous letter to

M. De Melfort, stating that a lady, who had an important communication to make to him, desired to meet him, at eleven o'clock at the *bal masqué*; concluding by repeating the instructions already detailed in the letter to Madame St. Armand.

The hours that intervened between the purchase of the domino and the moment for assuming their disguise, seemed interminable to the unhappy husband and wife. A hundred times was Alicia about to abandon her intention, as the dread and indecorum of exposing herself, alone, in so vast and profligate an assembly, arose to her imagination. But, then, the idea that her absence would leave her hated rival undisputed possession of her husband, again maddened her, and determined her to execute her plan, in defiance of all the feminine misgivings which still made her shrink from the anticipation of the scene which she felt must occur.

Soon her embarrassment was excited by the thought, that her servants must be acquainted with her visit to so disreputable a place—and alone, too; she who never went any where without her husband.

"But what avail now," thought the wretched Alicia, "my fears of the condemnation of my own menials? What signifies to me what the whole world may think, in comparison with the necessity of preventing Jules from meeting that wicked woman!"

The astonishment depicted on the countenances of her domestics, when, at half past ten o'clock, she entered her carriage, disguised in a mask and domino, made the blush of shame mount to her very forehead, and almost induced her to abandon her resolution. But now that the servants *had* seen her in her disguise, and *had* formed their surmises and conclusions, any pusillanimous retrogadation would be even worse than fruitless. Away, therefore, with all irresolution; and she determined to proceed in her perilous enterprise.

On arriving at the Opera House, and discovering the throng around the entrance, she became so much alarmed, that she shrank back in the carriage; and again for a moment, meditated a return to her home. But, growing desperate at the thought, that in a few minutes she might be too late to prevent the meeting between her husband and the object of his guilty love, she hurriedly alighted; and, giving the servant orders to await her return as near the spot as possible, tremblingly entered the theatre.

The lights, the music, the tumultuous rush of persons, and above all, the noise, struck upon her terrified senses, and made her feel scarcely capable of preventing herself from sinking on the earth. Various masks accosted her with the usual hackneyed addresses; and amused by her evident alarm, seemed peculiarly bent on persecuting her with their flippant attentions.

The strangeness of her position, alone in a crowd for the first time in her life, the motley throng of hideous masks, and the disguised and squeaking tones of those who wore them, appalled her; and she shrank in painful alarm from each person who addressed her, though, in escaping from one tormentor, she only found herself assailed by another. But, in spite of her fears, one passion, painful and mighty in its influence, still supported and gave her resolution to proceed. This passion was, jealousy, which steeled her nerves, and deadened all other feelings in her troubled breast.

She advanced towards the appointed spot; but though eleven o'clock had struck in sounds that vibrated like a death-kneel in her ear, no person like the one described in her letter was visible. She repeatedly made the concerted signal with her bouquet, but in vain: she was only addressed by a crowd of masks, all utterly dissimilar in appearance to the one she sought with so much fearful interest. What if he had already joined her detested rival? there was agony and madness in the thought!

"Why are you alone, *beau masque?*"

"Where is your unpunctual cavalier?"

"Take my arm, and do not wait for him."

Such were the questions and phrases with which she was persecuted by the surrounding revellers; who, marking the impatience of her gestures as she turned from them, concluding that she was in search of one who had disappointed her.

She had passed nearly an hour in this state of agonising suspense—afraid to leave the appointed spot, lest she should miss the object of her search; when, to her inexpressible relief, she saw a mask approaching, whose domino exactly resembled the one described in the letter, and whose air strongly reminded her of that of her husband.

She raised her bouquet, and the mask instantly advanced and offered her his arm. So great was her emotion, that she could scarcely move; when her companion, feeling her arm trembling within his, to a de-

gree that indicated intense agitation, in a disguised tone expressed his sympathy, and proposed to conduct her to a box, where she might repose, until she should have regained her self-possession.

"How unlike the tenderness of his manner to me in past happy days!" thought Alicia. "No! he cannot love the person for whom he mistakes me, or he could not be so calmly indifferent."

A ray of hope shot through her soul at this thought; and she entered the box, far less wretched than when her companion had first accosted her.

I must now return to M. St. Armand, who passed *his* period of probation in a state of the most violent excitement. At a quarter to twelve he hurried to the *bal masqué;* and proceeded direct to the spot designated in the letter. There he saw a female in a pink domino, whose stature nearly resembled that of his wife, who gave the signal he expected. He joined her instantly; and, offering his arm, addressed to her some of the usual phrases on such occasions; to which, however she declined all reply, except by an affirmative movement of the head. He conducted her to a box, and requested her to unmask; but he could neither induce her to comply with this entreaty, nor to answer his questions. At length, maddened by what he deemed her crafty attempt to avoid detection, he tore the mask from her face, and beheld—an utter stranger.

He was rushing from her presence, frenzied by shame and disappointment, when the voice of his wife in the adjoining box struck on his ear. With one effort and bound, he burst into it, and discovered M. de Melfort, and Alicia in a paroxysm of tears.

"Vile woman!" exclaimed the furious husband; "at last, then, I have detected you in your infamy! And you, sir," he added with increasing vehemence, turning to the astonished De Melfort—"you, her paramour, come with me instantly, that this foul disgrace may be effaced in your blood, or mine!"

Alicia fell, fainting to the ground; and De Melfort, having attempted to raise her, received a violent blow from the maniacal husband.

A crowd collected round the box; and the presence and influence of so many strange faces, momentarily allayed the wrath of the desperate St. Armand. He instructed one of the *gens d'armes* to place madame in the carriage; and then, giving him the address of her mother, ordered her to be conveyed to her residence.

St. Armand would listen to no explanation that De Melfort could offer: and, in a few hours he was a corpse; having been killed by the first fire of his adversary, in the duel to which he had compelled him.

Of Alicia nothing remains to be told, except that she is an inmate of a *maison de santé* with little probability of ever recovering her reason.

The plotters of the anonymous letters console themselves by asserting, that "they did not expect that their *plaisanterie* would terminate so tragically: nor would it, had not the St. Armands been romantic *imbécilles;* and, *therefore*, the whole fault rests with them."

With this ingenious logic I conclude. But, perhaps, you will protest that, as the impartial chronicler of events which have excited so much attention, I ought to arbitrate between the opposing parties, and adjudicate the degree of censure which they should incur. *En verité*, then, I think the St. Armands *were* very silly, sensitive people; but that their antagonists had rather a greater love of *tracasserie* than, *comme il faut*, people ought to possess.

The moral—as every tale should have one—is, that people should not pretend to be better or happier than their neighbors, lest they become victims to a *mystification de sociélé.*

Addio, cara mia! Ever thine,

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

FROM THE MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

YOUR voluminous packet has been following me to three or four *châteaux*, where I have been paying visits; so that it is now several weeks since it was written. It was, nevertheless, as all your letters are, very acceptable; and I thank you for the lively sketches it contained.

Your *séjour* in England, *ma chère* Caroline, will render you a philosopher of the cynical school; for your *apperçu des mœurs Anglais est un peu méchant mais bien amusant. C'est un genre de philosophie* which begins to be much *à-la-mode* here, but which it requires great tact and *esprit* to display gracefully and successfully.

You possess both in a pre-eminent degree; which you must not be offended if I

attribute to your long residence in France, where they are indigenous: while in your island they are exotics, that rarely flourish, and still more rarely are successfully exhibited.

Chez vous ma chère, notre esprit, when imported, is like our fashions, which are so clumsily adopted, but not adapted, that they disfigure, rather than embellish, your compatriots. Witness the bedizened English ladies, whose laborious exertions to appear well dressed, and still more laborious efforts to shine in conversation, in the *spirituelles réunions* in our gay capital, have afforded, and still afford, us so much amusement.

Ces pauvres dames, with that want of perception which is one of their principal characteristics, always fancied that we were laughing *with*, and not *at*, them; and returned in triumph to their land of fogs, as dense as their wits, to relate their *succès à Paris*.

We were reverting to some of these miladies, last evening, at *la* Duchesse de Mirrecourt's, when she related, that one of them had gravely told her that she had studied philosophy with a Scots professor, that many of her countrywomen did the same, and that she was surprised that the French ladies did not follow their example.

"Then you imagine, *ma chère dame*, that we French have no philosophy!" asked *la duchesse*.

"I confess that such is my impression; for you are all so gay, so cheerful, that I conclude you have not studied so grave a science," replied milady.

"Oh! then, we are to attribute to philosophy, that gravity, *tristesse* and *ennui*, *que vous nommez*, blue devils," said *la duchesse*, with an arch smile, furtively directed to her coterie.

"Yes," answered milady; "*we* are superior to the gaiety that characterises your nation; *we* reflect, we feel, more than you do."

"*Enfin*, you are philosophers, and we are not, resumed *la duchesse*. "I admit that you ought to possess much more philosophy than we do, for you expend so much less. Rarely, indeed, do you use any portion of this treasure: witness your oft-beginning, never-ending, murmurs against your weather, your climate, your *ennui*, and all the other inevitable ills to which people are subject; while we apply all the philosophy we can acquire to support, or forget them. We expend our philosophy like prodigals, and it adds to our enjoyments; you hoard yours like misers, and it gives you no advantage.

"You boast of your superior wisdom, and smile somewhat contemptuously at our frivolous gaiety; while we envy not, but pity, your sombre gravity; as we believe that the people who support the ills of life with the most cheerfulness, and forget them with the greatest facility, are the happiest, and, consequently, the wisest. *You* are above this happiness, and *we* are superior to the *ennui* which sends half your nation wandering into every clime; as if locomotion could relieve a malady that arises in the discontented mind, which pursues you in all your migrations. Yet you assert that you travel to be amused; but, instead of finding interest, or amusement, in what you behold, you discover only faults. Every thing is compared with your own country—that country whence your *ennui* drove you, and which, while in it, you decry, but the moment you desert it, you exalt. We, however, always find our *belle France* the best of countries, and, consequently, rarely leave it."

Notre bonne duchesse has a habit of never citing the arguments employed by her adversary, unless they are so weak as to be easily refuted; so, as she did not repeat what defence your compatriot made, I am led to conclude it was not so deficient in sense as the few phrases our friend selected for quotation might otherwise have induced us to suppose. The *duchesse*, however, more than insinuates that she silenced milady;—a possibility, I think, less doubtful than the implied assertion that she also convinced her.

Notre chère Paris is so much changed since you left it, that it is hardly to be recognised. We royalists totally avoid a court where, at the *fêtes* given, one may be jostled by one's *coiffeur*, *modiste* and *cordonnier*, in the uniform of the national guard, profaning, by their presence, those *salons* which, since the restoration, have been sacred to the *noblesse*. With all our modern philosophy, such *rencontres* would be more than one of *l'ancien régime* could support: hence, we carefully abstain from the Tuileries, and have the credit of *dévouement* to the exiled family; while if the truth were told a horror of finding ourselves in *mauvaise compagnie* operates much more strongly in attaching us to the old order of things.

Of politics I shall say nothing, except that Louis Philippe proves the truth of your Shakspeare's assertion:—

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

Florestan is still *l'esclave de la* Comtesse D'Hauteville, who, I suspect, encourages his natural propensity to extravagance. I have lately seen her wear some very fine pearls, which, I am sure, were his gift; and I have observed certain symptoms of a derangement in his finances, that prove *qu'il est géné l'auvre* Florestan! I retain a warm attachment to him, though I smile when I compare it with the ungovernable passion I felt when we were married. *C'est malheureux que l'amour ne puisse pas durer! Apropos d'amour, le duc m'est toujours dévoué*, which is a great consolation. His mother lately found a rich heiress for him; an acquisition that would have been very acceptable to his finances, which are not very flourishing: but he would not hear of her proposal—a rare example of attachment, in our days of selfishness.

I was almost tempted to pity your poor little friend Augusta, at being talked into a marriage for which she had no predilection —*pauvre petite! Mais*, it will be all the same in a year hence; for she will then, probably, feel less indifference towards her husband than if she had loved him when she married; and will be spared all the annoyances to which women who love their husbands are subjected.

Heigh-ho! Do you remember how jealous I used to be of Florestan? Never shall I forget my despair at discovering his first infidelity. I thought I should die—ay, and wished it too, simpleton as I was; and now, I can see him lavish on another those attentions that were once all mine, and see it without a pang. We are the best friends in the world; and, after all, this is the next best thing to being lovers. It took me a long time, however, to make this discovery; nor do I think I should have arrived at it, had not the *duc* come to my aid. Nothing helps to make us forget an old love so much as a new; and I feel such an attachment to the *duc*, that it is only when I recall to memory the still more vivid and wild one I once entertained for Florestan, that I am forced to recollect the melancholy truth, that love *can* change.

Marry some *très rich et puissant seigneur, ma chère* Caroline, and come to Paris, where you will be joyfully welcomed by

Votre amie affectionée,

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

Mon mari vous dit mille choses aimables.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

You will be glad to hear, my dear Mary, that the poor child i have adopted thrives apace, and is really a source of comfort to me. His fondness of me, too, dear little fellow, increases; and he clasps his hands, and crows with joy, when I appear. One half-hour spent in playing with him in my dressing-room, is worth whole hours spent in crowded *soirées* and balls; which, if it were not for Lord Nottingham, who has kindly undertaken to initiate me into the modes, customs, and persons of the new world into which I am launched, I should find insupportable indeed. Lord Annandale insists on my being present at all their *fêtes*, rallies me on my preference for solitude, and seems desirous to fill up every moment with some new pleasure—the search after which I find as tiresome as he appears to think it agreeable.

He told me this morning, that I must be guarded in my observations in society, and not display my rusticity with regard to its general usages, under penalty of being exposed to its ridicule—"a penalty," he added, looking most seriously, "more to be dreaded than all others, being one which is never overcome."

I asked to what he alluded, wondering what I could have said, to subject myself to so grave an exordium.

"Did you not observe," he replied, "how Lord Henry Mercer laughed when you made that very *naïve* speech about Lady Harlestone? A few more such speeches will render you the talk of all the clubs; nay, more, the subject of their merriment. I thought the Comtesse of Hohenlinden would never have ceased laughing when Mercer told her of it."

I felt my anger a little excited, at learning that I had been ridiculed, while ignorant as to the cause; and my reflections led to his making me a disclosure that has shocked and disgusted me. Yes, Mary; the man who has vowed to love and protect me, and whom I have vowed to love, honor, and obey, has torn the bandage from my eyes, by informing me, that nearly all the women in the circle in which I live—that circle in into which *he* has led me—are supposed to have attachments with the men whom I, in the simplicity of my heart, believed to be their husbands, judging from the familiar attentions I witnessed—and which attentions I thought, even from husbands, too familiar for public exhibition!

"And knowing the conduct of these

women," said I, "you could permit them to approach me!"

"You must, really, my dear Augusta," was his reply, "learn to understand society. The ladies you allude to are the most fashionable in London—universally sought after and received, and living on the best terms with their husbands. Why, then, should I object to your associating with them? Such an absurd piece of prudery would expose me to the ridicule of all London; were I so wanting in tact as to put it in practice."

"If the ladies in question," replied I, and I felt my cheeks glow with indignation, "are sought after, and well received, and live on the best terms with their husbands, it must be because, adding hypocrisy to vice, they deceive the world, and the husbands they betray."

"By no means: society has no right to pry into the private conduct of any woman whose husband has not denounced her; and most husbands have too much philosophy, or good-nature, to be severe towards their wives, who, grateful for their forbearance, repay it by similar indulgence. Lady C. receives Lady D., because it is agreeable to Lord C., who in turn, permits the constant presence of Mr. E., and thus domestic harmony is preserved, *esclandres* avoided, and husbands and wives, who no longer could be lovers, instead of proving a source of mutual *géne* and torment, become friends."

"You surely jest," said I, "and are imposing on my inexperience, by the statements you have just made."

"*Pas de tout ma chére;* I assure you I have only stated the fact. Nine out of every ten married pairs belonging to *our* circle, stand precisely in the position I have described, which is the secret of the good understanding that subsists between the greater number of them."

"And you approve of this odious, this demoralising system?" asked I.

"Why, as my disapproval would not change it, and would inevitably draw on me the hatred of all our *clique*, I think it more prudent to submit *en philosophe*. People never forgive those who would either amend or instruct them; and, as I wish to enjoy life, I am content to let others please themselves, in preference to rendering them displeased with me. Besides, *you* are too charming, and *I* am too sensible of your charms to be likely to take advantage of the latitude allowed to Benedicts, or to have eyes for any other beauty."

As he thus spoke he kissed my hand, with an air as gallant as that which *le premier danseur* of a *ballet* kisses *la premiere danseuse;* but, seeing the grave, and, perhaps, contemptuous expression my countenance assumed, he changed his tone, and said—

"Do not look so very much shocked, I beseech you; let us take the world as we find it, my dear Augusta, and be content with being as good as we can ourselves, without trying to become reformers of others."

"I am not so Utopian as to expect to reform society," resumed I: "but I can see no necessity of associating with people whose principles and conduct are so diametrically opposite to all that I have ever been taught to respect."

"Why, you surely would not be so unreasonable as to wish me to close our doors against all the fashionable world, because they have emancipated themselves from prejudices, the acting up to which was incompatible with happiness?"

"Prejudices!" I exclaimed; "is it possible, Lord Annandale, that you can thus confound virtue and vice! that the chastity of a wife, and the fidelity of a husband, can be considered as prejudices?"

"Really, my dear Augusta, your inexperience makes you view things in so strange a light, that there is no reasoning with you. Do not, I pray you, become that most disagreeable of all things, a prude; or that most repellant to my nature, a sectarian."

So saying, he quitted the room, leaving me to chew the cud of bitter, not sweet, fancies; and to regret still more than ever the infatuation and wilfulness that led me to bind myself to one I can neither love nor respect. Now is explained to me the cause of all that freedom of manner, that levity, and above all, the easy indifference, with which the people I meet conduct themselves in society.

And it was a husband's hand who removed the veil from my eyes, and showed me guilt in all its hideous deformity, of which I never should have formed an idea! But, now that it is exposed to me, ought I to consent to receive beneath my roof persons of whose vices I can no longer entertain a doubt? Do I not owe it to virtue, nay, to myself, to avoid them? nor give the sanction of my presence to their conduct? I seem to have grown old within a few hours; this fatal knowledge of evil has shocked and grieved me; and the very

air I breathe appears heavy and oppressive, from my newly discovered sense of the crimes that contaminate it.

Lord Nottingham cannot, surely, be one of those that Lord Annandale has been describing. No; he too much resembles Lord Delaward to have any sentiment in common with those around me. He found me yesterday with little St. Aubyn on my knee, who, as usual, was crowing and smiling to show his love for me. The poor little fellow can now say, "mamma," very plainly; and, proud of his success, frequently repeats the endearing epithet. Lord Nottingham took him in his arms, played with, and kissed him, and quite won the child and his nurse's heart, by his notice of him.

I like to see men fond of children; it proves a kind heart and gentle nature. Lord Nottingham does not appear to esteem any of the women who most frequent the Comtesse Hohenlinden's; he treats them and her, too, with distant civility, while they are more condescending in their politeness to him, than is, in my opinion, compatible with the dignity of the sex. But what know, or feel, they of feminine dignity?

Caroline Montressor declares herself quite satisfied with London, though she complains that the women are not *spirituelles*, nor the men sufficiently *empressés* in their attentions to them. The *comtesse* is a very old and intimate friend of hers, and they pass much of their time together. There is a levity and coarseness about this lady, that, in spite of her good-humor and gaiety, are very offensive to me; but Caroline resents, as a personal affront, any animadversions of mine on the subject.

In three months, my dear father and mother will be in town. How I long to find myself in their arms again! I feel as if I had been years, instead of a few weeks, absent from them; and as if I had, during the period of our separation, existed in a cold and chilling atmosphere, that rendered the sunshine of their affection more than ever dear, and vitally necessary, to your affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

MY DEAREST AUGUSTA:—I have reflected long and deeply on your last letter. I feel the painful dilemma in which you are placed; and, though I perfectly agree with you in thinking that it would be most agreeable, as well as most virtuous, to avoid all intercourse with women of whose vices we are not ignorant; still, in the present state of society, and, above all, with a husband who attaches so much importance to its suffrages, prudence inclines me to advise you to be content in refraining from all intimacy with the parties in question, and not occasion an *esclandre*, by shutting your doors wholly against them.

In large assemblies, persons meet very much as in the round room of the opera, Vauxhall, or any other public place of resort; and, though the contact may not be agreeable, it does not entail intimacy: a dignified courtesy of manners, equally removed from rudeness as from familiarity, will repel freedom, and preclude offence.

Let your reserve be attributed to domestic habits; to, in fact, any motive, rather than one so pregant with danger to her who avows it, as a censure of the conduct of those who, conscious how justly it is merited, never forgive the inflicter, and revenge the implied slight by every means in their power.

Receive the ladies whose presence society still sanctions, though virtue disclaims them; but receive them only in large parties, and avoid all approaches to intimacy with them. This sacrifice of your own feelings of propriety must be offered up to preserve peace with your husband, whose sentiments being totally opposed to yours, I fear there is no chance of inducing him to adopt your views.

Wholly to oppose his projects would be to embitter your home, or, perhaps, banish him from it; leaving him to the influence of those who, from your exclusion of them, would be most irritated against, and disposed to injure you.

The unfortunate intimacy of Miss Montressor with the Comtesse Hohenlinden increases the difficulty of your position. Among all the women whose impropriety of conduct has served to throw an odium on the sex, there is not one whose career has been marked by a more unblushing perseverance in vice; or by a more open disregard for the appearances which, if they cannot redeem, at least conceal, its grossness, than this lady.

Her high birth and distinguished position have only tended to draw public attention still more to the glaring errors that she takes, indeed, no pains to disguise. Hence, her being known to be a frequent

visiter beneath your roof, must subject you to many disagreeable animadversions; and give cause of additional offence to any of, or all, the not more culpable ladies you exclude.

Under these circumstances, I would advise your candidly expressing your sentiments to Miss Montressor, with sufficient firmness to make her respect them.

You must be continually on your guard, my dearest Augusta, not to form habits of intimacy with any man, however amiable and good. This restriction is rendered indispensable by a state of society, in which the worst offenders are naturally the severest judges, for they estimate others by themselves; and it is almost an axiom in human character, that it acquires suspicion in proportion as it loses innocence. Remember, then, that you live among those who are ever prone to regard an approach to friendship between persons of different sexes with uncharitable eyes. They are sceptics in the sympathy of virtue, precisely because they are devout believers in the connections of vice.

The consciousness of innocence, though it enables us to bear up against calumny and injustice, cannot prevent the anguish of the wounds they inflict, wounds no salve can heal, and from which no time can smooth away the scar.

Appearances must be strictly preserved by the innocent (who, from conscious rectitude, are too often the persons most liable to neglect them;) lest the guilty attempt to palliate their own improprieties by directing attention to the semblance of error in the good.

The most really immaculate woman, who is inconsiderate enough to admit the daily visits of any man, or to permit his attentions, however respectful, to become remarked in public, must not be surprised if she is confounded with the most guilty; who are naturally anxious to blazon abroad the seeming indecorum that keeps their own faulty conduct in countenance.

The world judges only from appearances. By preserving these, the guilty obscure the view of their delinquencies, and become, consequently, less pernicious than if they exhibited reckless and unveiled vice. But those who, to vice, add the shamelessness of its exhibition, have to answer, not only for their own sins, but for the corruption their example promotes.

How many women, free from a thought of crime, have, through a carelessness as to preserving appearances, compromised their reputations, and dragged on a long life of humiliation, with no other consolation but that of knowing, that to imprudence, and not guilt, they owed their sufferings!

You, my dearest Augusta, will not peruse with impatience this long homily, but accept it as a proof of the affectionate interest of your true friend,

MARY DELAWARD.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

I AM happy to be able to tell you, my dear Augusta, that your excellent father and mother are in perfect health; and that our endeavors to console them for the loss of your society have not been totally unsuccessful. They can now revert to your absence with less sorrow, though not with less affection; and this is something gained. We have induced them to prolong their stay with us, which I trust, will be beneficial to their spirits, as well as to those of my dear father, who much enjoys the presence of such old and valued friends. Being anxious to make you acquainted with some of the persons whose society has rendered London agreeable to me, I have written to them to call on you; the period of my returning to town being too uncertain to admit of my waiting to present them to you personally.

I hope you will cultivate more than a mere visiting acquaintance with them; for they are of that portion of our aristocracy and gentry whose unsullied reputations, and irreproachable lives, present a barrier against that censure on our order which the indecorum and levity of some of its stray branches have drawn upon it.

They nobly uphold the fame and honor once so generally and so justly decreed to British women, before, at the mandate of fashion, some of them had learned to disregard that external propriety which should ever accompany virtue.

The Duchess of Fitzwalter you will find a most estimable person, and as agreeable as she is amiable, although the *clique* who have assumed the supremacy of fashion, vote her, and her circle, dull and *ennuyeuse;* but, with them, decorum is only another name for dulness. Lady Erpingham is also a charming person; and Mrs. Algernon Wentworth is as unaffected and unspoilt as if she were neither a beauty nor a wit. I have especially na-

med these three ladies to you, as being my most intimate friends; but the others to whom I have written to request that they will call on you, are not less amiable.

Much of your happiness, as well as your position and estimation in society, dear Augusta, will depend on the associations you form, and the friendships you cultivate. In the houses of the ladies I have named, you will find men of merit, and high attainments, and women of unpretending talents, undoubted sense and unsuspected purity.

They do not, it is true, give names to caps or bonnets; they are not patronesses of Almack's nor frequenters of the Zoological Gardens on the Sabbath-day; and to sum up all they are *not* leaders of fashion—a distinction never sought by the wise, and only valued by the foolish. The Duchess of Fitzwalter being many years your senior, and having a knowledge of life, rarely acquired except at the expense of some of those fine qualities peculiar to youth, all of which she has preserved—her society and experience will be highly advantageous to you, in enabling you to form a just estimate of those around you. It will be even more beneficial to you than that of a person of more advanced years, whose sombre view of the world is often no less erroneous than is the bright one of youth: for youth resembles a Claude Lorrain glass which imparts to all objects its own beautiful tint; but age too often resembles a magnifying lens of an ungracious hue, which only renders every defect more conspicuous, and more forbiding. I would have you view the world through neither medium; but through the clear mirror presented to you by the experience of this excellent woman—a mirror undimmed by prejudice, and unsullied by ill-nature.

There is an evil against which I would guard you, dear Augusta, because it is one fraught with danger, but into which, from inexperience of the world, too many young married women fall: I allude to the habit of receiving male visiters of a morning; a habit which engenders a degree of familiarity that, however innocent, I hold to be incompatible with the dignity of a matron.

The woman who permits her boudoir or drawing room to be made the daily lounge of men, soon loses that consideration, even among them, which every honorable woman ought to inspire. Her *salon* becomes the focus of gossiping; scandal creeps in; party politics are soon intruded; the sanctity and privacy of home are violated; and the modest reserve, which is one of the most beautiful distinctions of the female character, is replaced by a freedom of manner as unbecoming as it is reprehensible. But I have not yet enumerated all the evils of this habit, so generally adopted at present; I have only stated the bad effect likely to accrue to the woman's manners who permits it. Let me now draw your attention to the injury it is almost certain to inflict on her reputation.

The cabriolet or saddle-horses of a man of fashion, seen repeatedly at the door of a lady, are sure to elicit disagreeable animadversions from those, perhaps, totally unacquainted with her. These observations are related to others, generally with added comments, and not unfrequently with misrepresentations; reports get into circulation, and scandal becomes busy with her fame, which is too often sullied before an evil thought has entered her mind.

When once such reports have been promulgated, all her actions are misinterpreted; every appearance of gaiety or levity is tortured into a proof of guilt; and the most innocent woman, whose conduct is thus prejudged from the semblance of impropriety which her own imprudence has furnished, could hardly fail to be ultimately condemned.

Is not this a heavy penalty to pay for the pleasure, if pleasure it may be called, of enduring the tediousness of a few idle men some twice or thrice a week, during those hours which they know not how otherwise to occupy? They are aware of the evil consequences such visits will entail on her who permits them, for they daily hear the scandalous comment that similar conduct excites; but *n'importe:* as long as they are bantered on their supposed good fortune at their clubs, or paragraphed in the newspapers, they are satisfied, though it is at the expense of the reputation of an innocent woman.

Lord Delaward has initiated me into all the mysteries of society, which had seemed unfathomable to my own previous inexperience. He is my Mentor, who points out the dangers of which only a skilful pilot can steer clear; and I furnish you, my dear Augusta, with a few extracts from my newly acquired knowledge. Your last letter gave me great pain, a spirit of sadness pervaded it that must not be indulged. Indeed, you are unjust to Lord Annandale in expecting from him precisely those qualities in which he is deficient, and in not appreciating those

that he really possesses. If he be neither sentimental nor domestic, he is good-tempered and kind-hearted; and you may, by treating him with affection, render him more estimable. Do not, while cherishing his child, harden your feelings against its father; and remember that, though a too long and constant association with the artificial circle in which he has lived may have blunted his sensibility, you may again restore its natural tone by letting him perceive that you are interested in the change.

Adieu, my dear Augusta, and ever believe me your most affectionate friend,

MARY DELAWARD.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

THE contents of your former letter* pained me inexpressibly, my dearest Mary; and yet even before I gave Caroline Montressor an opportunity of refuting the imputation cast upon her honor, I felt persuaded that the charge was wholly unfounded. I was more than half disposed to let her remain in ignorance of the aspersion; but on reflection I thought it right to acquaint her with it, that she might justify her reputation to those who, unlike me, might be inclined to repose some portion of belief on the calumny.

How painful was it to my friendship to inflict this wound on her! Never did I perform a duty with more reluctance; and I endeavored to discharge it with as much delicacy as possible. She was greatly shocked; and evinced so much proper feeling on the occasion, that she convinced me, and would, I am sure, have satisfied you, of her innocence.

Levity, and a certain freedom in conversation, peculiar to women who aspire to the reputation of a *bel esprit*, are her only sins. They are venial ones, and should not be visited with undue severity. The tale that reached you, originated in the malice of a disappointed suitor of Caroline's, the Chevalier de Carency, a dissolute young man, who became enamored of her while she was yet little more than a child. Enraged at her rejection of him, he vowed to be revenged; and the story he invented and related to Lord Warrenborough is the result.

* This refers to Lady Delaward's Letter, page 113, in which the charge made against Miss Montressor's honor is made, but which Lady Annandale did not receive for some time after.

I am convinced that you, my dear Mary, will rejoice at being assured of the innocence of my friend, as I know the generosity of your nature; for my own part, I experience an increased attachment to her, now that I know the injustice to which she has been subjected; an injustice doubly painful to the feelings, as being exercised to an orphan, without a single male relative to defend or to avenge her. How dreadful it is to reflect that men can exist capable of the baseness of defaming the virtue they could not overcome, and ought, consequently, to defend! Pray, inform Lord Delaward of Caroline's innocence; for I would not have one, to whose good opinion I attach so mnch importance, continue in error with regard to my poor friend.

My dear boy continues to thrive apace, and seems every day to grow more fond of me. He is a charming child, and you would be delighted with him, he is so good-tempered and engaging. Lord Nottingham is very partial to him, and St. Aubyn already knows him quite well, goes to him gladly, and sits on his knee. I wish I could say that Lord Annandale evinced an equal fondness; but this is far from being the case; for be betrays an indifference towards him that quite shocks and displeases me. The poor dear little fellow seems conscious of his father's want of affection, and instinctively, as it were, shrinks from him when he approaches.

The Duchess of Fitzwalter has been here, and I like the little I have seen of her extremely, notwithstanding that she appeared under disadvantageous circumstances; for when she called, the Comtesse Hohenlinden, who is evidently no favorite with her, was here, and displayed a levity, and, I may add, an indecorum, in her conversation and manner, that must have prejudiced the duchess, not only against her, but also against me, for suffering it. I felt that a disagreeable impression was made on your friend's mind, but I had no means of removing it; for any verbal reproof of mine would have been as little heeded as are the tacit ones which I have frequently given to this incorrigible comtesse.

Lord Annandale, when informed of the visit of the Duchess of Fitzwalter, signified his desire that I should avoid all intimacy with her, or "her coterie," as he termed the persons who are precisely those whom I should prefer; and are, in fact, the very ladies with whom you most wished me to cultivate an intercourse. He observed, that the duchess was peculiarly

repugnant to his taste; and, by her formality and *hauteur*, spread a gloom wherever she appeared. He animadverted, in terms fraught with satire and ridicule, on the line of demarcation the duchess and her friends had drawn around their circle: the *cordon sanitaire* as he banteringly styled it, that was to exclude the contagion of gaiety and wit.

It is plain to me that the Comtesse Hohenlinden, piqued by the cold reception she meets with among the ladies in question, has sought to prejudice Lord Annandale against them, and has but too well succeeded. The women who frequent Annandale House are remarkable for an indescribable tone, a strange mixture of levity and *fierté*, as disagreeable as it is incongruous. They are all the copyists of the Comtesse Hohenlinden, but less good-humored; and there is not one amongst them who has excited an interest in my mind, or with whom I should wish to form a friendship.

Ah! how right were you, dearest Mary, when you prophesied that London and its pleasures would disappoint my expectations! This perpetual round of amusement, without one day of privacy or repose, fatigues me mentally and bodily.

It is like a brilliant comedy where the curtain never drops, and where both actors and audience are alike wearied. Often do I sigh for the shades of Vernon Hall with its tranquil enjoyments, allowing one to entertain a consciousness of one's own identity; while here, one is literally rendered incapable of self-recognition, or even self-communion: thought is banished by continuous and frivolous dissipation, and the affections seem useless in an atmosphere where there is no time permitted for their exercise.

When, a few days ago, I expressed a wish that my dear father and mother would come to London, Lord Annandale asked me how it would be possible to find sufficient time to satisfy them, old people being, as he rudely said, always *exigeant*.

How little he knows them! I answered, that no engagements could have half such temptations for me as the society of those I so dearly love.

"But you have duties, Augusta," he said, "that must be fulfilled."

"What duties," demanded I, "can preclude the sacred one to our parents?"

He positively laughed, and I felt angry—there is something so peculiarly offensive, at least to my feelings, in hearing the best, the most holy sentiments in our nature, thus made a subject of mockery.

Seeing I was hurt, he apologised, but added,

"You owe, also, duties to society, my dear Augusta, that must not be neglected. You are expected to appear at the houses of certain note, and to receive in your own all the persons of distinction. Your position, as *my* wife,"—and he looked as if he considered this my sole claim to distinction—"demands this; and such engagements, during the London season, are too numerous to admit of devoting any time to others. In the autumn, or during the winter, if we do not go abroad, you can give up a week or two to your father and mother at Vernon Hall: though I venture to prophesy, you would now find a *séjour* there, even of that brief duration, insupportably dull.

I asserted that, on the contrary, I should like it above all things; when he shrugged his shoulders, looked incredulous, and told me, it gave him pain to see me growing sentimental and romantic, instead of becoming a woman of the world.

And this, Mary, is the man, to marry whom I wrung a reluctant consent from my dear, dear father and mother! There is insupportable bitterness in the reflection!

I foresee that I shall find Lord Annandale little disposed to consult the wishes of my family, or my own, in arranging that we should see as much of each other as possible. Could I have anticipated this, no power would have induced me to marry him, even though he had possessed my whole heart. But I am rightly rewarded for bestowing my hand on one of whom I knew nothing, except that he was gay and brilliant—two advantages which often temporarily conceal the absence of those solid qualities on which domestic happiness depends. *He* is not changed since I made this fatal, this rash engagement; the change is in *me*, who, seeing the worthlessness of those pleasures he so glowingly described to tempt me—pleasures now deprived of the glittering veil that disguised their defects—turn, with disappointment, from the temptation and the tempter.

Forgive these murmurs, dear Mary, from your affectionate friend,

AUGUSTA ANNANDALE.

FROM MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

YOUR story has interested me exceedingly, *ma chère* Delphine. I do remember

having seen Madame de St. Armand, and was struck with her beauty. I praised you before, but I now tell you again, that the tale is so artistically recounted, that it might be entitled to a place in one of the fashionable annuals here, to which lords and ladies contribute. Have I your permission to send it, merely changing the names? so that you may have the satisfaction of seeing it beautifully printed, gold-edged, and bound in a gorgeous cover with some pretty face to illustrate it.

But to be serious—and this melancholy story is sufficient to make one so—it is a very distressing event; and the ladies who concocted the plot cannot feel otherwise than shocked at its results. *Entre nous*, I do believe, that there is no creature under heaven more wholly heartless, or more disposed to be mischievous, than a fine lady, and the fact of the plot against the unoffending St. Armands goes far to prove the justice of this assertion. Do not imagine that I confound a gentlewoman with a fine lady, in this censure. No; according to my view of the subject, a fine lady is rarely a gentlewoman, and a gentlewoman would not often condescend to be a fine lady.

Formerly, the terms "fine lady," and "fine gentleman," were applied to women and men peculiarly well-bred, and of remarkably polished manners: now, they are employed to designate some individuals remarkable for the affectation of fastidiousness, and the exemplification of folly, the assumption of *bon ton*, and the personification of vulgarity; the pretensions to ultra-refinement being, in my opinion, the most infallible symptoms of incurable coarseness of mind. The fine lady in France is, however, free from these assumptions. She is merely a vain and giddy woman, living only for amusement, capable of any folly, and, sometimes (as in the case of the St. Armands,) of any crime, to accelerate her plans in the pursuit of it.

I have been much pained and mortified, *chère* Delphine, by finding that my unfortunate entanglement with that vile and unworthy wretch, de Carency, has reached Lady Annandale, who, with the frankness peculiar to her nature, told me the fact. I hardly knew whether she or I felt the more pain or shame at the disclosure, softened, as it was, by her mode of detailing it. She is not, like me, schooled in deception—that art which the world renders necessary—and possesses not the power of concealing all external symptoms of those emotions to which the heart is a prey, even while tortured by them. This fair and pure creature blushed and wept while she repeated the tale that had been communicated to her as a warning against me; while I, writhing beneath the torture of humiliation at its truth, and shame at the detection, quelled my feelings sufficiently to exhibit only a proper degree of indignation at what I termed the falsehood of the base accusation.

The wretch to whom I owe this indignity revealed the fatal truth to some English lord, shortly after his flight from Florence, without the precaution of concealing my name. He even related your story, as well as mine. Would to God I had never seen this unequalled miscreant!

Lady Annandale thought it her duty, as my friend, to repeat to me the statement; and never can I forget the delicacy, the sensibility, with which she communicated it. I made, as I have said a desperate, but, *grace à mes nerfs*, successful effort to acquire self-control, seeing that my position in society, my very fate, depended on my convincing her that I am a victim to calumny. I stated that this dissolute man had proposed to marry me while I was yet little more than a child; that, maddened by my rejection of his suit, he had invented this atrocious falsehood; and that, imagining you to have prepossessed me against him, he has also vilified you.

This explanation, with a few fervent declarations of horror at the infamous charge, and agony at the idea of any human being crediting, or even hearing it, drew from this warm-hearted and noble-minded woman a flood of tears of the softest pity, and protestations of eternal constancy and friendship.

I was subdued by her generous sympathy, and could not restrain the emotions it excited. Yes, Delphine, there are moments when my better nature seems to triumph over the worldliness that has so long hardened it, and I again feel susceptible of the gentle affections that are, I begin to think, indigenous in woman's heart.

I told Augusta that, rather than expose her to the censure of those who could believe me guilty, I would immediately return to the abode of my aunt; but she would not hear of such a measure. She insisted on my remaining the whole season with her; and though always kind, now redoubled her affectionate attention to me. I mentioned something about the possibility of Lord Annandale's hearing the tale in question; but she stopped me

by saying, that it was quite unlikely he should, for that the friend who had thought it necessary to communicate it to her would never name it to any one else.

This friend is, I am persuaded, Lady Delaward; and her knowledge of my disgrace accounts for her invariable coldness and *hauteur* towards me. How dreadful it is, *chere* Delphine, to have to blush before a proud and stern woman, who has heard of one's guilt, and who believes it! My asseverations of innocence would have fallen on an incredulous ear, had they been addressed to Lady Delaward; but never should they have been addressed to *her*. No, forbid it, pride! forbid it, shame! I would rather hide me in some distant region, where never human sympathy could reach me, than meet the reproachful glance of a cold-hearted prude, after having weakly and vainly attempted to mollify her proud and callous nature, by a voluntary and abject confession of my crime and remorse. With such beings I should be for ever indomitable, stern and reckless, with scorn and mockery on my lips; while, with Augusta, weeping and blushing at being compelled to repeat an accusation of me, I feel every harsh emotion subdued, and am ready to throw myself at her feet, avow my errors, and implore her to remodel, correct, and guide me. Such is the influence her softness and generous pity exert over my stubborn heart.

Why did I urge this fair creature to wed one so wholly unworthy of her as is Lord Annandale, and so totally incapable of appreciating her? Lord Nottingham is precisely the sort of man with whom she would have been happy, as all I see of both of them convinces me. They would have met—would, I am sure, have loved—and, in all human probability, have married, and enjoyed the felicity they deserve, but for me. Her conduct on the late trying occasion, makes me regret more than ever my fatal interference. I am interrupted, so must leave you.

Chère amie, toujours votre

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

Do not consider me ill-natured or obstinate when I confess to you, my dear Augusta, that my doubts relative to Miss Montressor's purity are still unremoved. *Her* assertion, in her own case, is surely insufficient proof of her innocence, to any but a too partial friend. Are not the charges against her borne out by the extraordinary levity and indecorum of her manners? I acknowledge that all I have seen of her but too well disposes me to lend credence to what I have heard; and, coupling the tale of the Chevalier de Carency with the unfeminine freedom of her opinions, one appears to me an evidence of the other. If I were less deeply, warmly interested in your welfare, I might be less severely disposed towards this lady: but when I reflect that she is an inmate beneath your roof, your daily associate—nay, more, your friend—I examine, with rigid eyes, her claims to such distinction; and, finding them so defective, would fain preserve you from contact with one whom I deem most unworthy. I fear my pertinacious adherence to the evil opinion I entertain of her will displease you, but I cannot vanquish it; and again I entreat you to guard against her influence.

I lament that Lord Annandale wishes you to avoid an acquaintance with the friends I was so desirous you should know. I dare say you have judged rightly in imagining his prejudices to proceed from the pique of the Comtesse Hohenlinden. Nothing serves more to render a person averse from *good* company than the habit of associating with *bad;* and, in the circle in which Lord Annandale has moved, all who are moral and decorous are pronounced to be dull. There is policy in this opinion; for, as the really good would not countenance the *clique* to which I refer, they proclaim their dislike of what they know they cannot attain. Notwithstanding I entirely disapprove Lord Annandale's selection of associates for you, still let me advise you not to irritate him or them by any harsh censures. Patience is a woman's best armor; and gentleness, her only safe weapon. These may not have an *immediate*, but, I believe, they generally have a sure effect; and, therefore, I entreat you to use them always. A prudent woman will seek, not so much to *convict* her husband of error as to wean him from it; for men rarely pardon any exhibition of intellectual superiority in their wives, while they are soothed and gratified by meekness and affection.

You are young, lovely, and highly gifted; Lord Annandale greatly admires you: why not convert this admiration into a sentiment more durable, more valuable, which would secure for you an influence over him most advantageous to his inte-

rests, and to your own? Coldness and indifference never enabled a woman to gain an empire over a husband's heart; and yet these are, even from your own confession, but too visible in your demeanor towards him. Can you, then, wonder that he appears careless of your wishes, or callous to your reasoning? Remember, that Lord Annandale has been a spoiled child of fortune—indulged and flattered to satiety. Truth has rarely reached him, and the love of hearing it is like the partiality for olives, an acquired taste. The friend who administers this unpalatable medicine should render it less nauseous, by affectionate kindness: so that its bitterness, like the physic given to children, may be almost merged in the accompanying sweets. Do not abandon yourself to the dispiriting and erroneous belief that yours is an incurable lot; for it is only a persistance in thus thinking that can render it so. Duties discharged, domestic affections cultivated, and the consciousness of having no subject for self-reproach, preclude unhappiness; though they may not bestow that vivid, but evanescent feeling, which the young and romantic but too often mistake for it.

Believe me, my dear Augusta,
Your most affectionate friend,
MARY DELAWARD.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

You give me good counsel, dearest Mary; would to heaven that I had sufficient resolution to follow it! But I am a wayward creature, and cannot feign a semblance of affection when I do not entertain the sentiment. It would be wiser, and more amiable, to endeavor to win Lord Annandale to purer, better, feelings and pursuits—even though, as I strongly suspect, the attempt would be utterly unavailing—than to dwell on his defects, as I am prone to do: but when was I wise or amiable? Alas! never the first, and rarely, if ever, the second. You will reproach me if I dwell on this painful theme; I will, therefore, dismiss it, and adopt an agreeable one.

The only amusements I enjoy in London, are the theatres, and the opera. One of the divine Shakspeare's tragedies, with Macready to personate the chief character, can always charm me; and at such representations I forget my chagrin and myself. I have always had, as you know, an inordinate passion for music; but it has greatly increased since I have been accustomed to listen to the heart-stirring voice of the inspired Malibran, or the dulcet tones of la Grisi.

The first inimitable songstress draws me continually to Drury Lane, where she is engaged; and it seems to me, that I listen with increased delight to her the more I become acquainted with the power and pathos of her voice. The low notes of it produce an effect on me that no others ever did. The sound appears to emanate from a soul thrilling with sublime emotions; and its deep harmony causes mine to vibrate. There is something mysterious, something magical, in its influence on me. It haunts me for many succeeding hours; and seems to me as if it arose from an inspired, passionate, and despairing heart, in an intensely profound consciousness of the insufficiency of mortal powers to satisfy the aspirations of an immortal spirit to a release from its earthly trammels, and to the fulfilment of a wider and nobler destiny.

I have avoided becoming personally acquainted with Malibran, because, I am told, she is the most animated and gay person imaginable, giving utterance to the liveliest sallies, and most *naïve* observations. For this peculiarity, which draws a flattering homage around her, I shun her society; because I would not have the associations with which she is mingled in my mind, disturbed by a light word or heartless jest from lips that seem to me only formed for the creation of the most sublime sounds. Those deep eyes of hers, too, have a profound melancholy, even in their flashing lustre; and I have never so perfect a sympathy with my compatriots, as when I hear those divine notes of hers followed by the plaudits of hundreds, too enthusiastically expressed to leave a doubt of the sincerity of the heart-felt admiration that excites them.

Malibran, in my opinion, seems to inspire her audience: they are no longer a vast crowd assembled to be amused; no, they assume a much more imposing aspect. They are carried away by passionate emotion, by generous impulses, and they feel within themselves capabilities, of the existence of which they were previously ignorant. She ceases to be a mere singer, or paid actress, in their eyes; she becomes an inspired sibyl that reveals to them gleams of a purer, brighter world, which they had forgetten, but to which her divine tones summon them to return.

Grisi's voice, charming as it is, produces no such effect on me; it is round, liquid, limpid, and perfectly harmonious, always creating pleasurable emotions, but rarely sublime ones. It never awakens an echo in my heart—never lifts my thoughts from earth; but, like the music of birds, it makes the earth more delightful, and the ear loves to drink in its dulcet tones. The voice of Malibran affects me as does sacred music; and I should dislike hearing it employed in singing light airs, as much as I should hearing a cathedral organ playing a waltz or contredanse.

Lablache's is also a voice that has great charms for me. It comes pealing forth, grand and powerful as a choir in some lofty temple; while Rubini's always reminds me of the plaintive, never to be forgotten chant of the *Miserere* in the Sixtine chapel at Rome, which, though heard while I was yet only a child, I remember as distinctly as if it had been but yesterday.

Who could support the effect of music to which we had listened in the society of one beloved, if death had snatched for ever from us that object? I, who have, thank heaven! never known the most bitter of all pangs, that of mourning for a dear friend, yet cannot hear serious music without feeling a profound, but sweet melancholy, that brings unbidden tears to my eyes, and thoughts of another world to my mind. To see people around me smiling, or conversing, while a grave harmony is holding communion with my spirit, seems little short of profanation; and I could never select such soulless beings for my friends.

You, dear Mary, will not smile at my enthusiastic admiration for music, when I tell you, that never is a sense of religion so strongly impressed on me as when I am listening to it. Yet, I fear, you will say, that religion ought not to be a matter of feeling, but a fixed and immediate principle, over which external sights or sounds should have no influence, or, at all events, no control. But I was ever a creature of impulses and instincts, one of the strongest of which is my affection for you—an affection that has never known a diminution in the heart of your

AUGUSTA.

FROM LORD VERNON TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

Vernon Hall.

MY DEAREST CHILD:—We are returned to our home, and miss you so much that I have recourse to writing to you, in order to cheat myself into the belief that I am, as in past happy times, talking to my own Gusty. You must often repeat the assurances of your happiness, my blessed child, to console us for the loss of ours, which departed with you. Yet I would not have you perfectly happy, Gusty, for I wish that you should feel the want of your mother, who so dearly loves you; and of your old fond father, too, who so unwisely spoiled you, by his incapability of denying you any thing, that, at length, you, knowing his weakness, asked him to consent to your abandonment of him; when he, silly, doting man that he was, gave up his only joy, his only comfort.

Ah! Gusty, you should not have left us so soon. Three years hence would have been quite time enough for you to have married. In that period we might have reasoned ourselves into living without you—you might have grown less fond, less engaging, less dear to us. But no, that never could have been; the longer you might have remained with us, the less disposed we should have been to have parted from you!

This place is totally changed. The trees look dark and gloomy, the lawns cheerless, the lakes still and sullen; and the birds seem to me to sing less gaily this year than I ever remember. Your mother, when I made this remark to her, said the change was in us, and not in the objects around. Perhaps she is right, my Gusty; yet I do love to fancy that all nature is influenced by your absence—but this is the folly of an old doting father.

I look after your flower-garden myself: every flower you loved seems to me to be a part of yourself; and I cherish them, as those fair and fragile things were never before cherished. Wise people would tell me that all this is very silly and foolish; and so, I dare say, it is: but I cannot repress, the feeling, any more than I can the disclosure of it to you, my own darling; an impulse that I have always indulged, even at the time when you were a little thing, and used to sit on my lap, and kiss my cheek, and run your fingers through my gray locks. Do you remember those happy days?

Your horse quite provoked me to day. Would you believe it, the ungrateful animal went neighing, prancing, and galloping, through the paddock, in as great gaiety as if his mistress had been here? He made me angry; but I consoled myself by thinking that you would, at no remote period, I hope, repay him for his ingratitude by a daily, and long gallop over the downs.

I had intended not to have said a word about these things in my letter, but, somehow or other, they have all slipped out. But do not be uneasy at what I have told you, dearest Gusty—only never forget us. Let us have the consolation of knowing, that you think of us, miss us, and long for us, and we shall be satisfied, until you are again in our arms.

Lady Delaward behaved to us with a kindness and affection never to be forgotten; her lord, also left nothing undone to cheer our spirits, but Lord Nottingham's considerate attention, if possible, surpassed theirs. He was so gentle, so steady, never in a hurry, as most young men always are; never betraying symptoms of impatience at hearing long stories from old people. Why, would you believe it, Gusty, he not only let your mother and I tell him every anecdote about your childhood—and you know we have a precious long collection—but he continually, spontaneously, asked us fresh questions? Yes, he is indeed a most amiable man, and delightful companion. What a husband he will make! How I wish that you —— I forgot what I was going to write, my child; but my memory, never of the best, begins to fail me of late.

Thank Lord Nottingham for all his affectionate kindness to us. Ah, Gusty, why have you left us?

Your letters do not satisfy us; they do not contain those outburstings of happiness that we looked for, to console us for your absence. How is this my child? Your mother says, that it proceeds from a delicacy on your part, of not appearing *too* happy away from us. And now I remember it, my Gusty, I have often and often wondered why you seemed so very cold to Lord Annandale, just at the last. Was it that you found, when the time of parting drew near, that you loved us better than you had fancied, and could not reconcile your mind to leaving your poor old doting father and mother? Yes! it must have been this thought that caused your sadness. Bless you for it, a thousand times, my heart's darling! I at once suspected this; and, to save you from the pain of separation, I offered Lord Annandale to go up to London at once; but he, to say the truth, opposed it so much that our pride took the alarm, though often since, we have wondered why he should have rejected our proposal. Your mother thinks that it was because he wished to have you all to himself, in order to accustom you to live without us. Perhaps it was so. I know not how you, my child, have learned the lesson, but I feel that we have not acquired it.

I promised, when I began this letter, to leave half of the paper for your mother; yet I find I have nearly filled it all, without having said half what my heart dictates to you. Bless you, my precious child, my own Gusty! prays your fond father,

VERNON.

FROM THE COUNTESS OF VERNON TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

YOUR father has told you, my most beloved Augusta, how sadly we miss you. I try to comfort him, by the prospect of our soon meeting; but my efforts have not been successful. I forgot my own regrets, in endeavoring to soothe his; yet I, too, my precious child, miss your sweet and joyous face every hour, as we miss the sun when his bright beams no longer cheer us. I find myself continually in your room, once so gay, and now so desolate. Your bed, with the pillow on which, from infancy, your dear head has rested—how sad does it make me, to look on it now! Your writing-table, your tambour-frame, your harp and piano, all, all, remind me that you, the dear presiding spirit which animated them, are far away.

Why is not Lord Annandale a lover of the country, like Lords Delaward and Nottingham? We should then see more of you, and might get reconciled to this separation; but, as it is, it has fallen heavily upon us. I do not neglect your poor pensioners, and I feel an increase of goodwill towards all our household from observing how much they sympathise with us in our regret for you. Heaven guard and bless my precious child, prays her fondly attached mother,

FRANCES AUGUSTA VERNON.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MA CHERE DELPHINE:—I was fearful that I should never come in contact with any of the women here most remarkable for their high moral character, and for a strict decorum of manner peculiar to the *noblesse* of this country before a clumsy imitation and gross exaggeration of continental manners had been adopted. Some, however, of these ladies have been to call on Lady Annandale; and have impressed me with a respect for them, if not with any warmer sentiment. One, the Duchess of Fitzwalter, was announced the other day, when *notre amie la* Comtesse Hohenlinden was reclining in the *bergère*, in the boudoir of Augusta, exhibiting her pretty feet and well-turned ankles to two of her attending *beaux*, by placing them in a more elevated posture than modesty sanctions.

This freedom of manner, this *abandon* and *laissez aller*, so peculiar to *notre frau grafinn* always brings a blush to the cheek of Augusta; who sits constrained and silent, to the no small amusement of the *comtesse*, who delights in what she calls shocking her English prudery. I could perceive, by the increased gravity of the Duchess of Fitzwalter's demeanor, that she was more surprised than gratified by finding *notre amie la comtesse* established here so apparently, at her ease: and I positively saw her cheek grow red as her eyes fell on the exposed ankles so ostentatiously displayed on the *tabouret*.

Notre comtesse, who has discovered that she is in *très mauvaise odeur* with the circle in which the Duchess of Fitzwalter lives, determined with that recklessness which is one of her distinguishing characteristics, to shock still more the decorum of that lady. We had been conversing on the cholera, and the alarming ravages it is making, previously to the duchess' entrance, and the *comtesse* resumed the subject by saying—

"I hope the cholera will increase, for only fancy how delightful it would be to become at once emancipated from all the absurd conventional restraints of etiquette, and what you, *mesdames*, call decorum! How pleasant it would be to lead a life like that so agreeably described by Boccacio, as having been passed by him and his friends during the *peste* at Florence! Ever since I read it, I have longed to find myself in a similar position.

The Duchess of Fitzwalter absolutely *ennuyed*, and Augusta became agitated with shame and indignation; while *notre amie* looked archly at her *beaux*, and triumphantly at me, directing our attention to the obvious discomposure of our hostess and her visiter; who, probably, will not seek to cultivate Augusta's acquaintance after this *echantillon* of the society she keeps, for there was a proud reserve in her demeanor, as she withdrew, that indicated some such determination.

The coldness of Augusta's manner towards the *comtesse* irritates the temper, but does not check the levity and coarseness, of that lady, who every where represents her as being *maussade*, *bête*, *et stupide*. From all these imputed defects, however, Augusta is far removed; but the position in which she is placed is one so peculiar and embarrassing, that it throws a constraint over the natural vivacity and gracefulness of her manners, and induces the adoption of a reserve and *hauteur* foreign to her disposition.

The extreme youth of Lady Annandale, and her total inexperience of fashionable society, have enabled her lord to usurp the privilege usually granted to all wives—that of selecting their female acquaintance. He encourages the frequent visits of those whose general tone of conversation is the most uncongenial to her taste; and, in truth, I must add, the least calculated to be advantageous to her morals. Augusta, having no power of excluding such unwelcome guests, entrenches herself in a proud reserve, which, instead of banishing them from her house, produces no other effect than that of unmitigated dislike to her whom they affect to consider and treat as a mere cipher, a spoiled and capricious child, whom for the sake of her husband, they tolerate.

Her fondness for Lord Annandale's boy they ridicule as the *entichement* of a girl for a new plaything; and her assumption of the gravity and reserve becoming the matronly character, as a whim of the moment. They, none of them comprehend her; how should they—beholding her only through the false medium of their prejudices, and of their offended vanity? But I, who have seen her in her happy home, the idol of her parents and the friends of her youth, know how warm, how affectionate is her nature; and often in spite of my stoicism pity her, in her present uncongenial position, in which she reminds me of some beautiful flower transplanted from its native clime, to droop and fade in a less genial atmosphere.

One of your countrywomen, *chère* Delphine, even though only emancipated from

her convent or *pension* a week before her marriage, would quickly assume, and pertinaciously retain the privileges of a *maîtresse de maison*. *Notre comtesse* and her *clique* would soon find themselves excluded from the *salon d'une Française nouvellement mairée*, if they were not suited to her taste, even though they were the dear friends of her husband; nay, perhaps, this circumstance, would in her mind, be a *raison de plus* for their exclusion.

There is, I observe, a natural tendency to subordination in young Englishwomen, which, had their husbands perception enough to discover and take advantage of it, might save much domestic annoyance. But Englishmen are, for the most part, so totally devoid of tact, and so wholly absorbed in their selfishness, that they seldom adopt a system calculated to give them more than a temporary empire over the minds of their wives, and still more do they use that empire wisely.

Adieu, belle et bonne! Croyez toujours à l'amitié de votre

CAROLINE.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

MY DEAR MORDAUNT:—I have read the publication to which you referred me,* though Heaven knows, I never felt less disposed to read, or less capable of judging a grave production, than at present. I agree with you in pronouncing the criticism it contains to be partial and unjust, and think I can guess the writer. There is no surer criterion for judging of a man than by his criticisms. Benevolence is almost always allied to mental superiority as is malevolence to that species of smartness termed literary acumen, which enables its possessor to detect and exaggerate the faults of a work, while he remains totally insensible to its merits.

A critic gifted with superior mental powers will be more inclined to lenity than severity, because he is above envy; but one of limited intelligence will ever be prone to depreciate what he cannot equal. Such is the writer of the review in question, who, having failed as an author, avenges his own want of literary success on his more fortunate contemporaries, reminding one of the truth of the old rhymer's lines—

"Authors turn critics when of fame they're foiled
As wine to vinegar oft turns when spoiled."

You observed, I am sure, the great importance he attaches to style, which he seems to think more important than matter. Now, I am of opinion, that to pay more attention to the style of an author than to his thoughts, is like regarding a woman for her dress more than for her person. Style, like dress, should be appropriate, and not detract attention from what it was meant to adorn.

You say that you felt disappointed in ——; that he is less brilliant than his works prepared you to expect to find him. This remark I have heard applied to every literary man of our day; with what justice I will not stop to inquire. Has it never occurred to you why it is that we hear so many persons express the disappointment generally felt in the society of authors whose works have afforded them the greatest pleasure? Is it not, that in the works we perused the secret thoughts, the elevated aspirations poured forth in solitude and addressed to the *minds*, and not to the *ears* of men? How much more freely can a writer give forth his sentiments to the public, than to his most intimate friends! In perusing a work, we make acquaintance at once with the mind of its creator, free from the constraint imposed by conventional ceremony. We are not influenced by his countenance or manner; by the sound of his voice, or the tie of his cravat; all of which frivolous accessories bias our judgment of him, more or less, however much we may disclaim the humiliating imputation. His works admit us to a familiarity with his secret thoughts; we become gratified by finding in ourselves a sympathy with his feelings; and we quit his productions with self-complacency, because delighted by the discovery of the elevated sentiments they have awakened in us.

We encounter the man who has conferred upon us these benefits; we are surprised and disappointed at finding that he gives us only the ordinary topics of the day; and even those, perhaps, are delivered with the reserve which the conventions of society impose, or with the flippancy that the exhilaration of gay companionship occasionally produces.

His appearance, manner, or the tone of his voice, is not precisely what we expected; for people always form an idea of an author, and are apt to be displeased when he is found to be dissimilar to it. The

* The letters of Mr. Mordaunt, having little connection with the conduct of the story, do not appear.

cut of his coat, fashion of his waistcoat, tie of his cravat, or color of his gloves, may, as I before said, give offence and direct against his person the raillery of those, who, perhaps, have most loudly praised his works.

Absurd as these remarks may appear, they are, nevertheless, true. Often have I known such unworthy trifles as some of these I have described produce dislike, nay, injustice. An author comes into society, often tired and jaded from writing, to discharge some duty imposed by politeness; or, simply to unbend his mind, its force and depth being reserved solely for his study. In his works is seen the profound but clear stratum of his unbroken thoughts; but in society an occasional ripple only is perceived that but faintly indicates the vigor, the majesty, of the under-current. The conversation of even the most distinguished writer, is ever, more or less, influenced by the persons around him; and, like the chameleon, it too often takes the hue of the nearest object. He adopts, perhaps, this particular tone, not for the purpose of displaying his own thoughts, for they attain publicity through the channel of his writings, but in the idea of suiting the moral calibre and temple of the often uncongenial circle in which he finds himself. Hence the disappointment experienced by those who, having known the author only by his works, find the man, however agreeable or even brilliant, possessed of, seemingly very disproportioned powers.

I have been writing to you about critics, style and authors, as if my mind were perfectly at ease: never was it less so, and I have trifled on these subjects to escape from *one* that engrosses every thought, every feeling. Strange that, conscious as I am of the hopelessness, the madness of the passion that consumes me, I cannot conquer it. In flight alone, could I find safety, but I have not fortitude enough to banish myself from her I adore.

I can now sympathise with those who are the prey to an ungovernable affection, and believe all the follies to which it can lead its victims; yet am I more than ever sceptical that any man of honor could, under its influence, betray the woman he really loved, into guilt and shame. I have never, even in the wildest dreams of passion, pictured to myself the possibility of triumphing over her virtue. Nay, more; frail and selfish as is the nature of man, I have never even dared to desire such a result. She, pure and bright as she is, might look with the same pity on the sentiment she has given birth to in my breast, as that which angels are supposed to entertain for those almost idolatrous affections of mortals, which are extenuated if not redeemed, by their intensity, and freedom from guilt. But never shall this heart be laid bare to her who rules it; for, if I dere not seek her compassion I would not incur her contempt, by such an unhallowed avowal.

Ever, my dear Mordaunt, sincerely yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

CHERE CAROLINE:—Your last letter has given me great pain. How dreadful, that De Carency should have proved himself in every way so vile! How base must that man be, who betrays the errors to which his own duplicity gave birth! I could forgive his betrayal of my indiscretion, as, *grace à Dieu!* I have escaped all the evil effects to which it might have led; but, as you are still unmarried, this exposure of the *faiblesse* of your youth may be most mischievous.

I told Florestan, who was furious at the wretch's conduct. He says, that he lately heard that De Carency had been seen in a state of extreme poverty, to which his follies and crimes had reduced him; that he was wholly abandoned by his family, whom he has disgraced, and was hardly to be recognised: such was the change wrought in him, by the dissolute life he has led. Would to heaven he were dead! for he is always capable of annoying me, and exposing you, should it suit his plans so to do.

How delightful it must have been, *ma chère*, to have lived in the time of *l'ancien régime*, when it was so easy to procure a *lettre de cachet*, and immure any troublesome person. Fancy the comfort of shutting up such a man as this, and so effecting two good purposes: the first, that of preventing his giving publicity to the secret he knows; and the second, the precluding him from farther disgracing his family. Yes, *those* times were, indeed, infinitely preferable to these, when one cannot shut up even a worthless menial, unless the law so will it. All the privileges and immunities of *la noblesse* are destroyed; and, except for the pleasure of

having a coronet emblazoned on one's carriage and plate, there is no advantage to be derived from a title. What a sad state of things!

I like the conduct of your little romantic friend, Lady Annandale, very much, in this affair of the disclosure; for her romanticism seems to spring from the heart, and not the head, *qui fait toute la difference.* I value hers the more, as here, *l'école romantique* is founded on the imagination; it is an effervescence of sentimentality, that operates not on the affections, nor influences the conduct. With us, the most romantic people are precisely those who have the least real feeling; while, with you, *au contraire*, the romantic seems to spring from the heart.

Such a woman could not be happy, according to *her* notions, with a man like her husband; and half the women in the world, and particularly Englishwomen, will only be happy in their own way, a species of conduct which is—if you, *ma chère*, will permit a very homely comparison—like that of a hungry man, who determines to appease his appetite with certain viands only, which, not being able to procure, he refuses to accept any substitute; or, if he accepts, murmurs at the disappointment. This is a folly peculiar to woman, and betrays a great want of philosophy: but, though I am aware it is a weakness, I pity those who are its victims.

Lady Annandale would require such a man for a husband as you describe Lord Nottingham to be; and, having missed him (a sad mistake!) will probably be consoled by having him for a friend, until she finds that friendship between a beautiful young woman and a highly gifted, sentimental man, is rather a dangerous experiment. She will love him; and, being romanesque, this sentiment, instead of reconciling her to her destiny, will make her more than ever dissatisfied with it. With some women, love and crime seem inseparable. She will fear him she loves, then herself, and, afterwards, all that seems to encourage the sentiment, until she has rendered her lover unhappy, and herself miserable.

Women like your friend were not born to bestow, or enjoy happiness, except in the legitimate way; consequently, I fear all your schemes will but tend to increase her discomforts, unless you could persuade her *caro sposo* to die, and so leave her honorably free to wed Lord Nottingham. Even then, I doubt her being happy. She would, the moment her good lord was gathered to his ancestors, begin to find out that she had not been so *amiable* to him as she might have been. Forgetting all his defects, she would magnify her own; endow the dear deceased with all manner of good qualities, and, because she could not love him while he lived, mourn for him, when dead, with an obstinacy that might lead her to shut out the future consolations of a more fortunate union.

I have seen one or two examples of this folly, in women precisely of the same character and temperament as you describe Lady Annandale to possess—people who, not finding it possible to be happy in their own way, refuse to be so in any other. Now, I am one of these practical people who, eager for happiness, or even its semblance (which often does nearly as well —on the same principle, that the portrait of a lover consoles us, in some degree, for his absence,) grasp at every substitute that offers to replace the rarely attainable and unalloyed good. The result is, that I seldom torment others, and never myself.

I wish you could infuse a little of my philosophy into the mind of Lady Annandale, and then all might be well. Nay, I know not, *chère* Caroline, if *you* also have not occasion for some portion of it, notwithstanding your imagined proficiency in the science. Your philosophy is not, I can already begin to perceive, a very practical one; or, if so, is more exercised towards others than self. With all the advantages of travel, and a perfect knowledge of society on the continent, you have never been able to master the effects of an atrabilarious temperament, peculiar to your nation, that leads them to view all *en noir*, whenever events begin to turn contrary to their expectations or desires.

A year in the country, with some man who loved you, and whom you loved, with a few romanesque female neighbors, would convert you into a sentimentalist *de la première force;* repenting past errors as if they were crimes of the deepest die, and atoning for them by every future step, with scrupulous goodness: while I, who am a true optimist, would take all things as the inevitable course of events, which, as I could not control, I would support with gaiety. I am aware, that I am indebted to my country for the happy mercurial temperament that assists my philosophy; and I am grateful for it. I am interrupted, to examine dress for a ball tonight.

Toujours à vous,

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

Mille remercimes, chère Delphine, for the charming robe you have sent me. It reflects honor on your taste, and on the talent of that empress of *couturières*, Victorine, who has surpassed herself on this occasion. This *jolie robe de bal* looks as if made by the touch of the magical wand of some beneficent fairy, for a Cendrillon to figure in. It arrived without being the least *chiffonné, grâce à monsieur l'ambassadeur de France*, whose frequent couriers and roomy despatch-bags are very *utiles* to us ladies. Indeed, so frequently have I profited by them of late, that I begin, for the first time, to understand the necessity of having such official dignitaries in our capitals—a necessity I have hitherto rather been inclined to question.

Who was the French writer who called *Ambassadeurs* "the only spies who were openly accredited and respectfully received?"

Apropos des Ambassadeurs, a *ci-devant* one of France has lately been here, Monsieur le Duc de ——; and his reception has been so frigid as to make me feel not a little ashamed of my compatriots. You may remember how enthusiastically he used to speak of *ces chers Anglais, ces bons Anglais, si amicals, si hospitaliers, si prévenans, qui lui etoient tellement attachés et dévoués. Eh bien, ma chère*, would you believe it, *le bon duc* has visited London, no longer an ambassador giving magnificent balls, and *recherché* dinners, as a short time before he had been in the habit of doing, but as a private individual; and in that now rare, but always honorable, position, the faithful friend of a deposed master. You may guess the consequences; *ces chers bons Anglais* have permitted him to enjoy, unmolested, all the advantages of a strict *incognito*.

"What can we do?" asks one lady, whose doors used to fly open at his approach in the palmy days of his diplomatic splendor. "It is very embarrassing; we see so much of the present ambassador!"

She speaks the truth; her ladyship might say thus of every past, present, and future one who gives *fêtes*.

"The actual people might take it amiss were we to show any attention to the *duc*."

"It really is unpleasant having the *duc* here at this moment," says another of his *ci-devant* friends.

"It betrays a want of tact under present circumstances," adds a third.

I have observed, that people who return to a place in altered circumstances are always considered to display this deficiency; and excite much the same feeling of embarrassment in the minds of their intimates that a dear, deceased, and much-lamented friend would occasion, were he to re-appear on earth some years after those who once wept his loss and had become accustomed to it, and to the possession of his property.

Each acquaintance by whom the Duc de —— was *feted* at no distant period, now finds some unanswerable reason for no longer embarrassing him with his attentions; and gets rid of self-reproach for their worldliness, by petulantly censuring the man he has deserted for thus injudiciously testing his past professions of friendship. Perhaps, however, some little excuse may be found for these heartless persons in the frequency of revolutions and changes on the Continent. Here it not unfrequently occurs that the ambassador who gave a *fête* last week, to which all the *élite* of fashion flocked is, owing to some alteration of sovereign or government, replaced this week by one of totally opposite politics, who gives his *fêtes* also to the same individuals, and, probably in the same house. In the mean time his predecessor shrinking into insignificance in some obscure dwelling, anxiously awaits another turn of the wheel of fortune, whose movements have of late become so rapid—owing probably, to the introduction of railroads—as to baffle all calculation.

Pray, tell me what says the *duc*, and the *Faubourg*, of *ces chers et bons Anglais* at present? But my question, at least, as far as regards *sa seigneurie*, is useless; he is too *comme il faut et digne* to be angry, and too *distrait* even to remember what his good and noble heart would fain forget.

My little friend, Lady Annandale, is caught in the wily archer, love's net, past doubt, and, I think, past redemption. She may, and probably will, struggle to extricate her heart; but, alas! woman rarely struggles successfully if once fairly caught and, like a bird ensnared in the toils of a fowler, only entangles herself more in the meshes by her efforts to regain her freedom.

There are moments when I feel so much pity for this lovely and interesting young creature, that I could yet be capable of sacrificing my own schemes to secure her happiness. Ah, you may smile at this

declaration, Delphine, knowing how I have steeled my heart against soft emotions since I became the dupe and victim of—a vil ain. But a woman, though she may, by circumstances, be compelled to enact the *rôle* of *philosophe*, never ceases to retain one of the inherent and indigenous qualities of her sex; and that is, pity. The young expend it on others, and the sentiment is called love; the old reserve it all for themselves, and it is named selfishness: the change is merely in the object; the principle is, even in the altered state, identical; consequently, I compassionate, and never blame, the egotists we so frequently meet in society. Could we read the histories of their lives, and trace the events that led to this selfishness, with how many romances, more touching than all those of fiction, should we become acquainted! By how many pangs occasioned by others, have they been tried! before closing all the portals of the heart, they endeavored to supply the place of the expelled idols with one equally deceptive and perhaps, equally unworthy—SELF!

While others love us, while we are necessary to their happiness, we rarely become egotists. Should we not, then, pardon those unhappy beings who, with hearts yearning with affection, yet finding none to reciprocate it, are compelled to lavish on self that sum of tenderness meant for their fellow-mortals? Is it not this *besoin d'aimer* that reduces elderly maiden ladies to cherish parrots, monkeys, dogs, and cats, and elderly gentlemen to cultivate less innocent attachments? I could be sentimental on this subject; *mais à quoi bon?* you would only smile, or worse, yawn, over my lucubrations on it; so I will quit them.

Apropos, not *de bottes, mais de sentiment*, how is *le bon marquis?* Is he still as much *épris* as ever with *madame la comtesse?* and is *madame* as much *éprise du collier, de perle, et autres belles choses?* But *reflection faite*, as men *will* be inconstant, even with wives as charming as *ma chère* Delphine, it is, on the whole, fortune, that his *penchants* have never led him *hors de la bonne compagnie;* as too frequently is the case with some of his contemporaries. There is something revolting in the sort of society to which a man is exposed in those *liaisons* with meretricious beauties. Well may it be said that gallantry, like misfortune, brings one acquainted with strange companions. How disgusting to think of the brothers, cousins, and friends, of unknown lives, unguessable professions, and unpronounceable names, to whom he must be civil; and the mothers, aunts, and sisters, to whom he must be polite! Do you not remember with horror the woful change that came over your cousin, the Duc de Harfleur's manners, after he had passed a few months in the society of some favorite sultana of this class? The *laissez aller* of his conversation, interlarded with phrases totally new and incomprehensible to our ears; the indolent lounging *á la sultan*, on every sofa within his reach, and the *nonchalance* with which he permitted us to ring the bell, pick up our fans if they dropped, negligent of performing any of the *mille petits services, auprès des dames*, which every well-bred man is too happy to fulfil. Oh, I shall never forget it!

By the by, *chere amie*, you would not be a little shocked, could you but witness the free and easy style of the men of fashion here. It positively amounts to insolence; yet they do not mean it. No, they only mean to be at *their* ease; but this precludes any well-bred woman from feeling at *hers*, in their society. They are at once *nonchalant* and familiar; make no ceremony of talking of the House of Commons, the political questions of the day, their hunting or shooting, or, in fact, all that peculiarly concerns themselves; rarely, if ever, introducing those topics which are generally supposed to be most agreeable to women.

The Comtesse Hohenlinden told me, that here the ladies are obliged to study the tastes and pursuits of the gentlemen, in order to find favor in the eyes of those lords of the creation. Is not this a dreadful degradation to our sex? Only fancy women talking of horses, and not only talking of, but visiting them in their stables! Fancy their betting, and keeping books in which are entered not *les douces pensées des dames*, but the wagers they have made, and the odds *pour et contre!* This would not be believed in France; *mais c'est un fait, je vous jure.*

Here, a lady who wishes to captivate, relies, not on her charms, but on her tact, and the weakness to which it is to be opposed. Is the man who is to be won a politician?—she reads all his speeches, an operation painful and impracticable to all save one impelled by a predominant motive. She does more—she succeeds in remembering some portions of them, and quotes them with eulogium; when, unless he is the most ungrateful of his sex, she is rewarded by his preferring her to all things save himself and his speeches.

The only chance of defeat consists

in the number of competitors for his favor.

If a man is devoted to hunting, the ladies who wish to please him are suddenly struck with admiration for that amusement. "They dote on horses;" they delight in driving to the cover-side; they pat the necks of the "beautiful animals," and praise the red coats of their masters. Nay, examples have been known of their donning scarlet habits, and risking their necks, to attract some coveted Nimrod.

If a man be fond of theatricals, then each lady who aspires to win him is dying to act too. She discovers that the amateur far excels the best actor on the stage. His tragic acting is so affecting (affected, she means;) and, having persuaded him that *he* is the only Romeo alive, she hopes to be selected as his Juliet.

Military men are courted, by the female aspirants flocking to reviews, and doting on martial music. Yachters are vanquished by delicate women, who tremble at the bare idea of a storm, and turn pale at a high wave, declaring, that "they are nowhere so happy as at sea;" that "a yacht is infinitely preferable to a house, and a sailor's life the most agreeable thing in the world, except that of being his wife."

It is thus that ladies in England administer to the weaknesses of the "sterner sex," and subjugate them (*apropos* of the word subjugate, a man said, two days ago, that subjugate and conjugate were synonymous;) while you, in *la belle* France, exact that deferential homage which is woman's due, and to which she cannot resign her claims, without being guilty of a want of respect towards her whole sex. I attribute the *mauvaise manière* of the Englishmen of fashion to the want of dignity of the women.

The long war took so many men away, that owing to their scarcity, they became more in demand, and the claimants were so numerous, that the claimed grew saucy. This, I imagine, first led to the unnatural system of the men being courted instead of courting; a practice to which they have now become so used, that I know not how it is ever to be eradicated. A French *grisette* would expect—ay, and exact, too—more attention than a London fine lady dreams of meeting from the men of her circle.

Am I not a voluminous, if not a luminous correspondent? One thing I am sure I am, and that is, *chère* Delphine's affectionate friend,

CAROLINE MONTRESSOR.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

YOUR *appergu* of the peculiarities in the manners and customs of your country, *chère* Caroline, interests me exceedingly, though it excites in me no desire to become a denizen *de l'Angleterre*. I was not prepared to expect such a total want of *retenue* in the circle denominated, *par excellence*, fashionable.

The English, who never do any thing by halves, have, it appears, exaggerated our French freedom and ease *de société*, just as barbarously as they do our *modes;* which they so caricature, that Herbault declares he never can recognise the original model of the *chefs-d'œuvre* he sends to your metropolis, in the vile imitations of them which he sees on some *dame Anglaise*, who, fresh from her native isle, visits his magazine.

Liberty has degenerated into license with the society you describe—not an unusual event: but this is an evil that carries its own remedy; for license is always certain, sooner or later, to produce a reaction, as well in morals as in politics. I should, consequently, not feel surprised at hearing, in a few years, that the *violation des bienséances et de la pudeur des mœurs* which you mention, has led to a revolution, or reformation, re-establishing in England a puritanical severity of manners similar to that which marked the times of the Protector Cromwell.

I have such a dislike to revolutions, that I would deprecate any thing that tends to produce them. They are like earthquakes, which if they overthrow what is faulty, also destroy much that is good; I, therefore, regret the indecencies that sully your society, because they will, probably, lead to a subversion of manners quite as disagreeable as the present are objectionable.

There are certain anomalies in English manners, that strike me as being very revolting. I refer to the odious publicity of actions for breaches of conjugal fidelity. With us, husbands are too sufficiently humiliated by a suspicion of the bad conduct of their wives, and shrink from taking any step to prove it. Thus, it never amounts to more than a suspicion, which extends no farther than their own immediate circle; and the suspected individuals so conduct themselves in society, that no symptom of indecorous familiarity is ever apparent. Hence, public decency is not violated; and, consequently, public morals are not out-

raged, however private ones may be sometimes compromised.

With you, how different is the case! An injured husband in England gives publicity to his wife's shame, and his own dishonor: he uncovers his domestic wounds as beggars do their sores; perchance to excite pity sometimes, but disgust always. To prove the injury he has sustained, he must furnish evidence of the affection his unhappy wife felt for him previously to her dereliction from virtue. Thus, the sacred privacy of conjugal love is unveiled before the profane and gloating eyes of that many-headed monster denominated "*the* public." Sentiments of affection, and terms of endearment, become by-words of the coarsest raillery in the mouths of the lowest and grossest rabble. Revolting details of facts demonstrative of the criminality of the accused are not only proclaimed in court, but published in your journals; until all England and the Continent are convinced that the husband is what, with us, a husband would rather die than avow himself to be; and his wife, the mother of his innocent children, is branded with the searing iron of ignominy.

How a proud man, or a man of honor, can thus expose himself, seems wonderful; and yet such examples occur continually with you. Yours is essentially a commercial country; and every thing, however sacred, even to the affections, are viewed with a reference to this national peculiarity.

Is a husband wounded in the tenderest point, the honor of his wife, he seeks redress by an action against her seducer; and if he establishes her guilt, and his own shame, the law adjudges him what is considered the full value of both, mulcted from the purse of the paramour.

Are a fond parent's hopes for ever blighted by the seduction of his daughter, he appeals to the law for redress. His child's frailty, previously known but to a few, is proclaimed to the world; a stain is for ever attached to her name: but the father receives the price at which her virtue was estimated.

Is a young and innocent girl disappointed in her virgin affections by some false youth who had won them, and sought her hand—she *flies* not to solitude to weep over his broken vows, and her too fond credulity, but to the next lawyer, to bring an action against the deceiver for a breach of promise of marriage! She then displays every line "the false one" ever wrote to her; repeats every protestation of love he ever uttered; and seeks to recover a pecuniary compensation as a salve for her wounded heart.

Confess, *ma chère* Caroline, that the examples I have quoted of the commercial habits of your compatriots prove little for the delicacy of their feelings; and prone as we are, in our Anglomania, to adopt your customs, I do not think those to which I have alluded are ever likely to become popular in France.

Madame ma mère has lately given us much inquietude by having become a devotee, and placed herself under the guidance of a certain Père Maubois; a Jesuit more remarkable for a covetousness of the good things of this world than for a conduct likely to ensure those of the next. I fear he may induce her to make a will in his favor; but any *exposé* of his real character, on our parts, would only tend to render her more disposed towards him, as she is more self-willed and obstinate than ever.

Adieu, ma chère Caroline! *je vous embrasse. Votre affectionnée*

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

I AM *au desespoir, chère* Delphine, at hearing that *le pauvre* Florestan has been so imprudent. I always knew Madame de Heautforte to be *un peu bête*, but I did not suspect her of the folly of encouraging *votre mari's* propensity to extravagance, or still less of the meanness of profiting by it.

This is a *triste affaire*, and may become very embarrassing in its consequences; for Florestan, with an excellent heart, has not the wisest possible head. And so *madame la duchesse, votre mère*, has become a devotee, *la dernière ressource* of coquettes, who give themselves to God when men slight them. If, indeed, she took to religion, it would be fortunate, but unhappily for France, bigotry too often usurps the place of devotion there. I like not the influence le Père Maubois has acquired over her—*mais quoi faire?* My plan would be, to praise him extravagantly to her; for, prone as she is to opposition, this may induce her to take the other side of the question, and ultimately render her disgusted with him.

The newspapers have commenced commenting on Lord Nottingham's marked at-

tention to Lady Annandale. Their *liaison* is announced as an established fact, though neither of them have, I dare say, ever contemplated such a *dénoûment* to their romantic passion.

Augusta will, probably, never see these statements, for she detests scandal too much ever to look into those journals were it may be found; and her adorer, Lord Nottingham, has an equal aversion from it: consequently, their names may be coupled together, and the most injurious insinuations relative to them circulated about this overgrown metropolis, while they remain in total ignorance of the amusement which such statements afford to their friends, and the triumph it furnishes to their enemies.

Lord Annandale will not, however, be left long in a similar state of ignorance on the subject. Some half dozen dear friends, who cannot bear that a man should not know whatever must inflict pain, will write him anonymous letters to apprise him of his supposed dishonor. They will, probably, send him the paragraphs that announce the mortifying intelligence; and his is precisely the character to be most irritated by this publicity, because his vanity is more intense than his love, and infinitely more vulnerable.

Lord Annandale would have been a good man, had he not lived too much in the heartles circle which has demoralised his principles and blunted his better feelings; leaving his *amour propre*, with its inordinate cravings for indulgence, sole arbiter of his own actions, and the sole criterion by which he judges the conduct of others. The woman who would administer to his vanity might not only rule him despotically, but would find in him a kind and affectionate friend, for his disposition is good, and his nature grateful: but she who wounded this omnipotent passion would lose all influence over him, and meet a severe censor and implacable judge.

Augusta's visible indifference has deeply mortified him; and so soured his opinion of her character, that he will be prone to give ear to charges against her which, had she conciliated, instead of wounding his vanity, he would not for a moment entertain.

This state of their relative feelings and positions assists my project; and the conviction that Lady Annandale never would be likely to feel an affection for her lord, nor to enjoy felicity in her union with him, reconciles me to the scheme of dissolving the ill-assorted marriage; and of securing for myself the husband who cannot form her happiness, and whose happiness she, certainly, does not constitute.

Whenever a qualm of conscience intrudes, to suggest a doubt whether the means I employ to accomplish the end I aim at be justifiable, I soothe it by mental vows to be so good and irreproachable, when I have gained the goal, that I shall atone for the sins committed by the way.

Is it not thus, that all who do wrong silence "the still small voice of conscience?" for no one, I do believe, was ever yet so obdurate of heart as to meditate a perpetual perseverance in crime. *Helas!* do I not resemble him who, plunged in guilt, declared that, when he had acquired a certain sum, he would forsake his evil ways, and turn honest?

I am interrupted, and can only add, that, whether faulty or good, I shall be always,

Chère Delphine, your affectionate friend,

CAROLINE.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MA CHERE DELPHINE:—I owe you a *dédommagement* for the abstruse essay, *sur les mœurs Anglais*, I inflicted on you in my last letter; and shall, therefore, treat you with lighter matter in this.

"The fashionable world," to use the phrase of the papers, has been thrown into a state of agreeable excitement by the unusual occurrence of a *bal costumé* which has put into requisition all the *modistes*, *couturières*, and jewellers, of this vast metropolis. Travellers have been consulted, books of costumes referred to, and all, save the means of furnishing the dresses, been into grave consideration.

The Comtesse Hohenlinden has been the presiding patroness of this *fête;* and at her house, *les dames les plus à la mode* have met frequently, to consult, demur, and decide on the momentous subject of their dresses.

Lady Acid, who has gained a reputation for *wit* on the strength of extreme *ill-nature*—which, *entre nous soit dit*, in London is continually mistaken for it—declares that, in a moral point of view, *bals costumés* should be encouraged here, as they compel many ladies to think of *character* who had long forgotten the advantages of such a possession!

"How novel it must be to several of my friends," said Lady Acid, "to have a character even for one night!"

"Why, after all," said Lord Charles Brettville, "they have done so long, and so well, without such an appendage, that it would be now as useless as the long-exploded pockets."

"How many hearts," drawled out the sentimental Mrs. Coningsby, "beat quicker now, in the anticipation of conquests to be achieved, or chains to be riveted, or truant admirers to be regained ———"

"Or female friends to be mortified!" interrupted Lady Acid.

"I shall go as a Venetian lady," said the Marchioness of Eiderdown, "because it will enable me to wear the whole of my jewels."

"The only occasion on which she is brilliant," whispered Lady Acid in my ear.

"I shall go as a shepherdess," lisped Lady Simper.

"Because the dress will display at once the smallness of her waist, and of her wit," added Lady Acid again.

"I shall go as a Swiss peasant," said Lady Mellicent.

"To show her legs," rejoined her friend, Lady Acid.

"I have chosen a Greek dress," observed Lady Rawlinson.

"And not ill chosen, either," whispered Lady Acid, "if all we hear of her gaming propensities be true."

"I mean to personate a Magdalen," said Mrs. Walton, "with my hair falling on my shoulders."

"Are you not afraid of people's thinking the character too appropriate?" asked her last discarded admirer.

"My dress shall be that of a Roman empress," said Lady Easy.

"Messalina, I suppose," whispered Lady Acid.

"In what character shall I go?" asked Lord Wellingford.

"In that of the Careless Husband," replied Lady Acid.

"And you, Mr. Milner," demanded another, "what character will you personify?"

"The Poor Gentleman," whispered Lady Acid.

"The report, then, is true," said Lady Rawlinson, "that Mr. Milner is ruined, and lives by his wits."

"As to the being ruined, I believe it is true enough," answered Lady Acid; "but the living by his wits I hold to be impossible, for the capital is too small to allow interest enough to support even a mouse."

"Observe Wellingford," said Mr. Milner; "how conceited he looks! he thinks himself a perfect Adonis."

"Poor fellow! though no Adonis, he may yet share the same fate," replied Lady Acid—that of being destroyed by a *bore*—if he should again be condemned to a *séjour* in the country, *tête-à-tête* with his wife."

"Only look at Mrs. Tylney—how dreadfully dull she is! never are her lips opened but to utter a *bêtisse*," observed Lord Charles Fitzhardinge.

"I should forgive her that, if she did not, also, in opening them, display teeth even more disgusting than the stupid speeches she utters," said Mr. Milner; "but bad teeth there is no forgiving."

"Why is Lady Overton's face like a solicitor's desk?" asked Mr. Harcourt.

"Oh, spare us your conundrums and puns, I beseech you," said Lady Acid.

"Do you give it up?" asked the inveterate punster, red with anger at Lady Acid's interruption; "why, because it is full of indentures!"

"Dreadful! shocking!" uttered half-a-dozen voices; "really, Mr. Harcourt, you should give over puns."

"How gay Lady Georgiana Spencer looks!" observed Lord Charles Fitzhardinge.

"Gay!" interrupted Lady Acid; "she is, *au contraire*, disposed to be *triste* at this moment; but, recollecting that her fine teeth, the only attraction she possesses, must be displayed, she assumes that everlasting smile. On the same principle, Lady Emily Harrowfield, though naturally a very lively person, takes especial care never to smile, lest she should exhibit her front teeth, which are defective."

This, *chère* Delphine, is a specimen, and not an exaggerated one, of the sort of jargon that usurps the place of conversation in the exclusive circle in London; where ill-nature and dulness reign, and where the most certain way of making people feel pleased with us, that of rendering them pleased with themselves, is less understood than in any other part of the civilised world. In France, satire often proceeds less from ill-nature than from the desire of displaying wit; but here, as there is little wit to be shown, the ill-nature must be the paramount motive. With you Lady Acid would not be tolerated; she would

be denominated a *mauvaise langue*, and to her would be applied, and in truth with justice, the French verses,—

> "Si elle n'eut mal parlé de personne,
> On n'eut jamais parlé d'elle."

My countrywomen are not at all prone to pay compliments to each other. Here you never hear any of the thousand civil speeches that pass between ladies in France, which, even though wanting in sincerity, possess a certain charm; as flattery, if judiciously administered, is always acceptable, however much we may despise the flatterer. I call flattery the oil of society, which protects from rust the hinges that sustain it. In England this oil is deficient; and, consequently, the grand machine often creaks and jars. It is only men who flatter women here; and, though their object is an interested one, their stratagem is generally crowned with success; probably, in consequence of the rarity of its employment. These calculating and insidious parasites might, on such occasions, repeat the old verse,—

> "I treat her with gentle good-humor, that she
> In return, may be more than good-humored to me."

Now, in France a woman is told every day, by every female friend she sees, that she is *belle comme un ange, jolie comme un cœur faite à ravir—et mille autres choses de ce genre*. She is, consequently, neither delighted nor overwhelmed with gratitude when men address to her similar assurances; and, therefore, the flattery is less dangerous to females with you than with us, and examples of feminine friendships more numerous.

I have nowhere seen so many ridiculous people as among the fashionable circles in which I live here, and at the same time, people so little amusing. In Italy and France one feels half disposed to pardon *les gens ridicules*, because they make one laugh; but here there is a gravity, a pretension in their folly, that excites a less agreeable emotion than mirth. On the continent the class to which I refer is composed of originals, harmless mono-maniacs, whose singularity is diverting. But here it consists of persons who, being only doomed by nature to be common-place, sigh for notoriety, and seek it by the only road known to them—affectation.

Lady Jerviscourt aspires to be considered a *bas bleu*, without even a knowledge of orthography; Lord Armytage sets up for a critic, without the power of comprehending one out of every dozen books he peruses; Mr. Radcliffe talks politics all day, though, except to cry "hear, hear!" his voice, luckily for the members, was never heard in the House of Commons; and Mr. Robertson sets up for a wit, by repeating all the bad puns he has ever heard, and spoiling half the good stories. Mrs. Addington votes herself a beauty, though nature has refused to sign her patent; Mr. Hutchinson believes himself a man of gallantry, because he stares every woman he meets out of countenance; and Mrs. Thomas Henry Allingham thinks herself a second Sappho, since she has dressed her hair *à la Greque*, and had some of her lame verses set to music by a disinterested teacher of that art.

> "Mais l'audace est commune, et le bon sens est rare,
> Au lieu d'etre stupide, souvent on est bizarre"

Adieu, ma chère Delphine! *amez toujours votre*

CAROLINE.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

How I wish you were in London, *ma chère* Delphine, for a month or two, to enjoy with me the incongruities of the strange *clique* with which I find myself surrounded! They really are unique in their indefatigable pursuit of pleasure, and in the signal unsuccessfulness of the chase.

I should be much more amused by them, had I some one on the spot to whom I could make my observations; but here there is not a soul, except *notre frau gräfinn*, and she is not *spirituelle* enough to perceive *les petits ridicules* which are to me so amusing.

But to quit general society and to return to that of which I form one. My little friend, Lady Annandale, is making a great fool of herself. She has taken into her head that she will turn *reformateur des mœurs à Londres*, never dreaming of the Herculean task she has imposed upon herself. Easier would it be tenfold, to cleanse the Augean stables, than to purify the morals of those with whom her husband chooses she should live. She objects to associating with ladies whose reputations are not spotless, (to what a limited circle must she, then, confine herself!) and is absurd enough to fancy that rank and fashion are not excuses for vice.

But the best of all is, that, while thus

harsh to ladies whose characters have so long been attacked by atrophy that they are wasted almost to a state of invisibility, she is exhibiting herself so continually with Lord Nottingham, that, ere long, her own character bids fair to be problematical. He rides with her every day in the park, —that is, he rides with *us;* but I always take care to get either before or behind them, with any second beau of the party, and so leave Lady Annandale, who is unconscious of the manœuvre, *tête-à-tête* with her *preux chevalier*.

He accompanies us to all the places which we frequent, and naturally finds himself by her side; while she nothing loath, listens, with pleased ears, to the praises of her dear Lord and Lady Delaward, or those of her more dear *père et mère*, whom Lord Nottingham affects to love and reverence. Already people begin to regard them with significant looks and smiles, the *avant couriers* of graver and more injurious comments.

The Comtesse Hohenlinden, piqued at Lady Annandale's reserve and coldness towards her, encourages malicious remarks; and I foresee that some fine day, while dreaming of virtue, and believing that she is to restore it to this modern Babel, Lady Annandale will find herself precisely in the category of those ladies whom she so severely reprehends, and whom she would fain exclude from her circle; while they, of course, would rejoice in her downfall.

Every hour's experience proves to me how little chance a portionless *demoiselle* has of obtaining a *bon parti* in England; and my *dernière ressource* is to convert Lady Annandale into the Marchioness of Nottingham, and your friend, into the Countess of Annandale.

I am thus serving three people, at least, if not four: myself, for self should always be the first object served; my young friend, Augusta, for a friend should come after self; Lord Nottingham, who, if my plans succeed, will obtain a charming woman, with whom, I am convinced, he is passionately in love; and Lord Annandale, who, instead of a *romanesque, tête montée* wife, who feels only indifference towards him, will possess a—what shall I say?—but no, one cannot decently praise one's self; so I leave you to finish the sentence.

The truth is, that vanity apart. I do think that, as he is a vain and ambitious man, I should be to him a more suitable wife than Augusta. She is too high-souled, too poetical, to enact that part which his fashionable tastes, and diplomatic tendencies, require: but I, who know the world, use its slaves for my purposes, while they imagine they are working their own.

Lord Annandale begins to be *ennuyé* by the obsolete fastidiousness of *madame son épouse*, relative to her associates; and, though he will not permit her to exclude them from his house, he cannot compel her to treat them otherwise than with a cold and repulsive ceremony, highly offensive to the guests and to the host. I rather encourage than thwart her folly on this point, because it facilitates my own plans. The seclusion she prefers throws her more into habits of familiarity with Lord Nottingham; makes him more in love with her every hour; and, if I mistake not, begins to excite in her breast an incipient passion, which will acquire irresistible force before she becomes aware of its existence: for few English children, and *no* French ones, were ever so pure, and innocent, as is this woman.

I do believe—and you know I am not prone to place implicit faith in female purity, or firmness of purpose—that, were Augusta to discover that the sentiment she entertains for Lord Nottingham is of a warmer nature than friendship, she would shun his presence, and seek safety against her own feelings in flight.

My plan is not to alarm her sensitiveness by the least hint, or slightest caution, until she finds herself the universal topic of scandal; her husband believing her guilty, society, as is usual on such occasions, taking his part, and expelling her from its pale, with the consciousness, in her secret heart, that, though innocent of actual crime, or even a thought of guilt, she loves Lord Nottingham.

To whom, then, but to him, can she turn? She has never cared for the gay world, or taken any pleasure in the society that we consider its greatest attraction. The sense of innocence will console her for any annoyance the publicity of the legal proceedings may produce; and, the divorce obtained, she will become the wife of the man she loves:—no bad exchange for being that of one she neither loved nor respected.

You ask me how all this can be effected without some demonstration of guilt? but nothing is so facile. I have previously explained to you how easily a woman's reputation is sacrificed in London, where "*ce n'est pas la faute qui est punie—c'est la*

bruit qu'elle fait. Les plus bruyantes sont ordinairement les plus legères fautes, et les plus fortes sont les plus silencieuses."

It would require only a little address to satisfy Lord Annandale that he is a wronged husband, because Augusta has indisposed him towards her by her undisguised indifference. His outraged vanity would avenge her coldness by a severity ruinous to her reputation; and an appearance of criminality is easily given which would justify her husband in resorting to legal proceedings.

You see I have already made myself *au fait* of the *rôle* I intend to enact: wish success to your affectionate friend,

CAROLINE.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

You ask me, *chère* Delphine, to give you an *apperçu* of the leading peculiarities that distinguish our islanders from your volatile compatriots; and of the great influence exercised on society here by that undefined, yet despotic power, fashion. I therefore send you a crude sketch, as a sort of equivalent and repayment for your very interesting story; and you must accept the promptitude with which I comply with your request more as a proof of my desire to gratify you, than of my power of performing the task.

LONDON FASHIONABLE SOCIETY.

AMONG the numerous peculiarities of the English, is an extreme susceptibility with regard to any criticism on their habits, manners, and customs; and an inveterate indignation against the individuals who are so hardy as to attempt it. If any foreigner, not *très répandu dans la société* here, writes his sentiments on the country, he is proclaimed to be *un ignorant*, full of presumption, whose opinions are unworthy of notice; but if he *has* been *très répandu*, all the vials of wrath are emptied on his luckless head. To describe what he has seen, is pronounced to be a most indelicate breach of propriety and hospitality. To say that the heavy magnificence of aristocratic dinners sometimes imposes a constraint on the guests, is, for a man who has dined with Lords A, B, and C, an indecent violation of *les bienséances;* and to note down that *soirées* of three, four, and five hundred persons, in rooms comparatively small, are not agreeable, is an outrage of all *les convenances* in the favored persons who have been seen jammed in the doorways, or scrambling on the stairs, at the houses of any of the ladies of fashion to which an *entrée* is considered a distinction.

When personalities are introduced, which I admit to be always objectionable, every one is up in arms. The praised think themselves not sufficiently so; the unnoticed consider themselves aggrieved; and the censured, however slightly the ferule may be applied, are outrageous. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the books hitherto published, descriptive of English manners, have been defective. The penalty certain to follow a successful portraiture of them will always be likely to deter the attempt; except by some amateur like myself, who exhibits *les ridicules de la société pour s'amuser*, or to amuse a friend.

To describe all that I see here, *il faut être Anglais;* for no foreigner can penetrate the mysteries of the *coteries* and *cliques* into which society is divided, without having lived some years in the country, and been initiated into its artificial systems. *Your* compatriots, who come here for a few weeks, form the most erroneous opinions of *mine*. Beholding only the surface, they describe, and not always correctly, that of which they had opportunities of judging only superficially, as if they had penetrated all the most secret intricacies of the great machine. Hence, their pictures are never true to the life; but resemble portraits painted from the reflected image of the originals in mirrors—shadows of a shade.

The English are so pre-eminently egotistical, that they regard all foreigners as intruders in their society. Persons who are not *au courant* of the subject of the day; who know nothing of the loves and hatreds of each *clique*, the *brouilleries*, scandalous stories, and ridicule, of the individuals who compose them; and who comprehend not the insinuations and the *demi-mots* of those around them, cannot be considered otherwise than a bore by a real fashionable of the exclusive circle.

It is true the stranger may be a man of genius, of versatile and brilliant powers of conversation, who has seen much, and reflected more: but what care those with whom he now finds himself? They think only of themselves and their own narrow

circle; and all who are not *au fait* of its mysteries are voted *de trop*. To be sure, they sometimes extend their favor to strangers who come in the unquestionable shape of a prince, a *diplomate renommé*, or a *littérateur* of acknowledged reputation. These are received as lions in the great menagerie of fashion; they are fed and stared at, and serve to lengthen the list of guests published in the *Morning Post* every day, with a due attention to styles and titles. If they remain only a short time in London, they depart in the belief that its polished inhabitants are the most hospitable people in the world, and that its circles present one continued and brilliant *fête*. Little do they imagine that their reputation, and not their merit, procured this flattering attention! Are they drawn out in conversation on the subjects in which they have acquired distinction? Does any one betray the least interest or curiosity relative to them, their pursuits—past, present, or to come—or the impressions they have received in the, to them, novel scenes around? No. When their names have been blazoned forth in all the papers as having dined at L—— House, dejûned at D—— House, and supped at S—— House, the usual number of times, and their faces have been sufficiently seen in the heterogeneous crowd styled the fashionable world, people who stared at them at first, from the curiosity excited by the published programme of their claims to distinction, get accustomed to "the odd-looking man with the brown wig, and the star;" or the "ill-dressed one with a decoration in his button-hole;" or "the man with spectacles and a bald head, who looks so stupid," and think no more of them.

If, however, some Curtius of society magnanimously sacrifices himself for half an hour by throwing himself into the gulf of conversation with any of these exotic worthies, he takes a malicious pleasure in mystifying them, by nodding assent to the expression of their erroneous opinions, and dissenting, by a well-bred shrug or deprecating shake of the head, from those they had with more justice adopted, but which happen not to be in harmony either with his prejudices or his love of mischief.

The enlightened stranger now discovers, that the orator whose eloquence had excited admiration abroad is little esteemed at home, because he is viewed through the false prism of opposite politics: that the author whose works have been as enthusiastically commended as universally read in other countries, is undervalued in his own, because his hair curls; or because he dresses too much or too little in the fashion (either of which crimes furnishes a sufficient cause for decrying him,) or wears yellow gloves, or commits some other equally offensive error. In short, the reputations that, on the Continent, have been stamped by the approval of all the men of genius, which France, Germany, and Italy can boast, are depreciated in the land that gave birth to their possessors; and the truth of the old proverb, that "no prophet is esteemed in his own country," is no where so perfectly or frequently verified as in England.

I have described the reception given to foreign lions in London: let me now state that given to strangers with less claims to attention.

A foreigner arrives with letters of introduction; or, in other words, certificates of birth, parentage, and—not education. He delivers them at the houses to which they are addressed, and, in return, receives a soup-ticket, *bon pour un jour*.

"What a horrid bore to have this man thrown on our hands!" says *Madame la maîtresse de maison;* "his aunt was so *prévenante* for us at Versailles, that we must be civil to him. What is to be done with him?"

"Ask him to dinner, to be sure," replies *Monsieur le mari*.

"But whom can one get to meet him?" demands *Madame*, with an air of chagrin and embarrassment; "people dislike so much meeting foreigners, until they are, at least, somewhat broken into our habits."

"Let me see: oh, yes—the Heberdens have been passing the winter at Paris; they, probably, know him; at all events, the gaieties of the Parisian season will furnish them with a subject in common. Yes, we'll engage the Heberdens."

Here is a letter and a card from le Comte de Bellechasse," exclaims Lady Grandison. "How tiresome! what is to be done with him? His mother was so civil to us at Paris, that we must be attentive to him."

"Send him a ticket for our box at the opera, mamma," says Lady Anna-Maria.

"And a card for our ball on Friday," lisps Lady Georgina.

"But if, through not knowing London usages, he should become a fixture in the box?" soliloquises mamma.

"But even if he should, mamma, ours is, you know, a double box, and——"

"We have always plenty of spare room

for a *beau*, you would add—*n'est-ce pas*, Anna-Maria? Well, there is one advantage in a double box," continues Lady Grandison, "it enables one to return civilities cheaply."

"Yes," answers Lady Georgina, "a double box at the opera is nearly as cheap a mode of returning civilities in London, as the sending tickets for the Chapelle is Royale, at Paris. Do you remember how we were inundated with them?"

The poor foreigner receives the invitations, the necessity of giving which has caused so much embarrassment to the hospitable donors. After a dinner at each of the houses, to the proprietors of which he has brought letters of credence, he is engaged to make one of a party to Greenwich. Thither he, with some difficulty, finds his way on the appointed day. Having duly admired the exterior of the hospital, and refrained from expressing his disapprobation of the exhalations arising from the mud, observing that the ladies do not object to them, his olfactory nerves are regaled with the mingled odors of fried fish within doors, and the fume of tobacco without. Such are some of the *agrémens* of this interesting excursion: and at last, fit termination, the bill being demanded, the luckless foreigner finds that, for the refined enjoyment he has been *invited* to partake, he has a sum to pay that would have defrayed the expenses of a month in the land of his birth.

This is another cheap mode of returning civilities peculiar to London: cheap only to the inviters, however; for, to the acceptors, it is rather a costly purchase.

The poor man returns, half dead, to his lodging, determined to eschew white-bait, cider-cup, and pink champagne, while he lives. After three days' suffering, and an apothecary's bill even longer than the Greenwich one, he is able to show himself once more. How you would pity the unfortunate victim, could you behold the lodging in which he has passed those three days, knowing, as you do, how luxurious is the accommodation of the apartment of a Frenchman *comme il faut!* No longer does he inhabit a spacious and lofty suite elegantly furnished; or an *entresol*, whose tasteful decoration and comfort are so inviting. Behold him in a small room, three parts of which are occupied by a four-post bed sufficiently large to contain half a dozen persons; this same bed piled with mattrasses, of a color and texture alone sufficient to banish sleep, but crowned by a feather-bed that defies it. The drapery has become of a nondescript hue, from its long intimacy with the smoky atmosphere, of which the fringe has amply partaken. The light enters by one small window, which commands a view of the house-tops, gutters, chimney-pots, and back-windows of the parallel street—an enlivening prospect for a solitary invalid! The paper that covers the walls of this chamber has been chosen with a judicious recollection of the smoky tendency of the chimney, and is in perfect keeping with the curtains of the bed and windows. A convex mirror, an ornament peculiar to English lodging-houses, graces the wall, crowned by an eagle that has lost one wing; yet, as though its escape from its captivity were still apprehended, continues to hold in its beak divers chains of brass, that fall gracefully back to the frame. One look in such a mirror is always sufficient to disgust the vainest man with his own physiognomy. The hall of this abode is generally occupied by three or four foreign couriers smoking cigars; and the house breathes of the united perfumes of soup, garlic, and *gruyère* cheese. The mansion stands in some populous street or square, in a district rarely visited except by foreigners, who seem to have a predilection for such places, and are ignorant of how vulgar they are considered to be; but, being kept by Frenchmen or Italians, their compatriots imagine they will be less extravagantly charged, if less comfortably lodged.

You will naturally wonder how I can have acquired a knowledge of such an abode as the one I have described; but your wonder will cease when I tell you that it was precisely in such a one I found *la pauvre* Comtesse de Mellancourt recovering from the effects of her sea-voyage, and lamenting her fate in being so lodged. Had I not informed her, that comfort, and elegance too, might be found in a London hotel, she would have submitted to her fate, and have returned to Paris exclaiming against the *mal propreté, et manque de tous les agrémens, des auberges Anglaises.* But Lord Annandale kindly recommended her to one where she did nothing but admire *l'extrême propreté, et le tapis de l'escalier;* which last household adornment, I observe, never fails to excite the admiration of your country men and women.

A dinner at Richmond follows the convalescence of the unfortunate foreigner whose lodgings I described; where muddy eels, cutlets—such as are never seen out of England—ducks, that taste more of fish than do the eels, and peas, that "have fall-

en into the sere and yellow leaf," tempt his delicate appetite: and for this luxurious fare he has also to pay, though invited, a sum that would have furnished the most *recherché* dinner at Lointiers, or the Rocher de Cancalles. Do you not pity your compatriot, *ma chère* Delphine?

Read this description to Florestan, who has such brilliant notions of the advantages to be enjoyed here: but tell him, also, that to the stranger who comes with a well-filled purse, Thomas's Hotel, the Clarendon, Grillon's, and some others, offer comforts not to be despised even by his and your fastidious taste.

A London season resembles the Saturnalia of Rome; during which, though a perfect liberty is professed to be allowed, the chains of the bondsmen are heard to rattle even while they dance. All here are slaves; yes, positive slaves, and to the most tyrannical of all sovereigns—Fashion. Does it not appear absurd that *la mode*, which you in France control, and use as an *accessoire* to your pleasures, we English elevate into a despot? who, like all despots, avenges on his subjects the weakness that led to his elevation, by depriving them of all volition, or, at least, all exercise of it. Endless are the sacrifices this Juggernaut exacts, and the penalties he imposes; but, in their submission to his decrees, his vassals are kept in countenance by their mutual emulation in shameless subserviency. So few, indeed, are the examples of refractoriness which occur, that these biped spaniels are seldom reminded that it is possible to rebel.

Nothing can be more indefinite than this imaginary good, yet nothing is more tyrannical than the laws it enacts, and the sacrifices it imposes. It prescribes certain quarters of the town for the residence of its votaries; certain persons, whose acquaintance, *coute qui coute*, must be cultivated; and certain others, who are to be as scrupulously avoided; certain equipages in which *les élégants* are to appear, and certain places where those equipages are to be exhibited; certain tradespeople who are to be employed; a certain style of magnificence in dinners, which must be adopted; and certain guests, whose presence is considered to be indispensable.

Now, as due attention to these laws entails expenses not unfrequently far exceeding the fortunes of the votaries of fashion, it is not to be wondered at that they are often involved in embarrassments, terminating in ruin, and not unfrequently in crime, and its worst consequences. The moment they can no longer support the appearance they assumed, they are driven with ignominy from the circle, to gain an entrance into which, they sacrificed fortune and fame. Their pretension and folly are severely reprobated by those, to conciliate whom, they incurred ruin; and they have not even the *triste* consolation of being followed into the retreats their poverty imposes, by the pity of their partners in error.

To propitiate this more than Eastern tyrant, his subjects form new friendships with persons they cannot esteem; and break through old ones with persons they loved. Even the ties of blood are violated at his mandate; for what daughter or son could exhibit affection towards the authors of their being, if they happened to be voted without the pale of fashion? The most reprehensible and undisguised bad conduct is tolerated, if the practiser is *à la mode*; the most disagreeable persons, *fêtés*, and the most stupid, *recherchés*, if once the seal of fashion be placed on their passports.

Fashion reigns omnipotent in London. Its stamp can give currency to the basest metal, and buoyancy to the heaviest dulness. Men of bad reputation, and women without any, can, by the power of Fashion, be kept afloat in the society it patronises; and persons of high birth and station, with unsullied names, may be rejected, if this chameleon deity looks coldly on them.

The favorites of Fashion are, indeed, a motley crew. Beauty, virtue, wit, or goodness, are rarely numbered among them; but, *en revanche*, the vicious, the dull, the frivolous, and the impudent, abound. Lady So-and-so is cited, in the clubs and coteries, as furnishing as much cause of complaint to her admirers, individually, as to her husband. Her acquaintances in general, and her friends in particular, do not attempt to deny the justice of the accusation; but Lady So-and-so is a fashionable woman, and, consequently, is received *partout*. Lord So-and-so, or Mr. So-and-so, is said to have ruined many men, and more women; he is suspected of a dexterity at play, and skill in calculation, that would not disgrace the most adroit professors of slight-of-hand; but Lord So-and-so, or Mr. So-and-so, is a man of fashion, and, as such, has the *entrée* wherever fashion is worshipped.

Even to inanimate objects extends the insidious and omnipotent influence of this moral upas-tree. Time and space are alike controlled by it; and the very drives and walks have not only their local and actual,

but their intermittent and recurrent fashion. *Sunday* after *Sunday* (but only on this magical day) crowds of our sex may be seen toiling to the Zoological Gardens, to exhibit at once their gay clothes, flirtations, and the proofs of their addiction to the study of natural history, in their accompanying and extensive train of biped animals; who, though far more ridiculous, are infinitely less amusing than those in the surrounding cages.

Ask them why they frequent this place, Sabbath after Sabbath, having long since exhausted their *naïve* observations on the monkeys, and they will tell you that "every one comes—there is such a crowd;" and that on this day alone the mob—their synonyme for people—cannot get in; and, therefore select it. In my simplicity, I ventured to comment on the absurdity of excluding the reputable and intelligent mechanics, and their wives and daughters, from the garden, the only day their avocations allowed them a few hours for recreation.

I was answered by, "Fancy how dreadful it would be for us to have such people *nez-à-nez avec nous* at every turn! Oh, it would be insupportable!"

"I cannot fancy," resumed I, "that there could be any thing at all insupportable in it; *au contraire*, the seeing new and agreeable faces, and witnessing the enjoyment of those who have fewer sources of pleasure than we possess, would be more animated than encountering the vapid countenances that people have been yawning at every night during the season; and who look as weary at beholding us, as we are at looking at them." It has been said by one of their most remarkable poets—one, too, of their own rank—that the English fashionables are as tired as they are tiresome: but this fact, like the secrets of freemasonry, is attempted to be concealed, lest new votaries should be deterred from entering the lethargic circle.

We live in a state of feverish excitement here, which, after having once submitted to for a while, becomes as necessary as opium to its habitual consumers. *Fêtes*, balls, *soirées*, dinners, *déjeûners*, follow in quick succession, always attended by the same faces, and the individuals nearly always attired in the same dresses; for my country-women are not remarkable for the *fraicheur* of their toilets. To be seen every where, or at least, in those places where people of fashion congregate, seems to be an indispensable duty with the English, and to avow the *ennui* they experience, is apparently equally essential.

"What a crowd!"

"How very oppressive the heat is!"

"Are you going to Lady Leslie's?"

"How dull this *soirée* is!"

These are the phrases one hears murmured around, night after night; yet the persons who utter them would be *au désespoir* were they not present in the very scenes they condemn. Not that they do not experience the *ennui* of which they complain; but that they fear their absence might be attributed to the want of an invitation, a calamity which would be considered tantamount to a loss of *caste*.

While, however, avowing that their amusements only excite *ennui*, they need not affect to be *ennuyant*, for that quality seems to be inherent in their natures. Yet they are vain of the supposed superiority which they imagine their assumption of fastidiousness of taste implies; mistaking for refinement that morbid state of mental inanity which proceeds from excessive luxury and idleness. The English fashionables are the only people who unshrinkingly display their mental diseases, though they carefully conceal their physical ones. I refer again to that epidemic malady, *ennui*, under which all of a certain class ostentatiously suffer. They seem not to be aware that it proceeds from weak intellects, incapable of rational occupations, or innocent amusement.

A fine lady or gentleman here acknowledges, without embarrassment, that she or he is "*ennuyé* to death," or "bored to extinction;" two favorite phrases, which those who have the misfortune to listen to them might with truth repeat.

The exclusive circle is at war with genius and talent, though their vanity often induces them to draw to their dull routs and prosy dinners, those who are considered to possess either of these attributes in an eminent degree. They think "it looks well" (another favorite phrase) to see among the aristocratic names that are every day announced in the newspapers, as having partaken of their ostentatious hospitalities, those that form the aristocracy of genius; for they imagine themselves modern Mæcenases, who patronise poets and philosophers, from the association with whom they expect to derive distinction.

For gentle dulness they have a peculiar perdilection—from sympathy, I suppose; a fellow-feeling being said to make men wondrous kind.

A few of the houses with the most pretensions to literary taste have their tame poets and *petits littérateurs*, who run about as docile, and more parasitical, than lapdogs; and, like them, are equally well-fed, ay, and certainly equally spoiled. The dull *plaisanteries*, thrice told anecdotes, and *résumés* of the scandal of each week, served up *réchauffées* by these pigmies of literature, are received most graciously by their patrons, who agree in opinion with the French writer,—

"Nul n'aura de l'esprit
Hors nous et nos amis."

You will think, *chère* Delphine, that my picture of fashionable life is too highly colored, but, believe me, it is not so; and, to convince you of this, I send you an extract from a sensible article, in an influential publication that appears here once a quarter; by which you will perceive that this class of society is by no means composed of the *élite* of the aristocracy of the country.

"We allude to the self-erected leaders of what is called the fashionable world and their followers—a set of weak, trifling, and often profligate people, by no means eminent for birth, wealth, or personal accomplishments, who, by dint of mere assumption, and by persuading a few men and women of real influence and high station to co-operate with them, have contrived to acquire a formidable description of influence in society, which seldom offers an effective resistance to a well-organised system of exclusiveness. A few pretty women, not in the highest rank of the nobility, met at Devonshire House, to practise quadrilles, then recently imported from the Continent. The establishment of a subscription-ball was suggested, to which none but the very *élite* were to be admissible: the subscription to be low, with the view of checking the obtrusive vulgarity of wealth. The fancy took; and when it transpired that the patronesses had refused a most estimable English duchess, all London became mad to be admitted; exclusion was universally regarded as a positive loss of *caste;* and no arts of solicitation were left untried to avert so terrible a catastrophe. The wives and daughters of the oldest provincial gentry, with pedigrees traced up to the Heptarchy, have been seen humbling themselves, by the lowest arts of degradation, to soften the obdurate autocratesses; and we fear it is no exaggeration to say, that, more than one *parvenu* has been known to barter his vote in parliament, and more than one *parvenue* her honor, for a ball-ticket. The prestige has greatly abated, and the institution is now tottering to its fall; but its origin is worth recording, as a ludicrous phenomenon in the progress of society."—*Quarterly Review*, for September, 1836.

We have in England, however, innumerable members of the aristocracy as exempt from the follies that stain the votaries of fashion, as they are unambitious of mingling with them. For the knowledge of their existence, I have to thank a discussion into which, a few days ago, I inadvertently fell, with Lord Nottingham; and which has enlightened me on some subjects on which I had formed erroneous conclusions. I observed, *apropos* to some tale of scandal repeated by Lord Charles Fitzhardinge, that for one example of bad conduct in France, I heard, at least, ten cited here.

"Yes, *cited*," replied Lord Nottingham: "but what does this prove, Miss Montressor! Why, not that there is more impropriety here than in France, but that we attach more importance to its existence, and more censure to those who practise it. If vice were as frequent in England as you imagine, it might be practised with greater impunity. The examples of it are not, as you observe, cited in France; but this fact, far from proving their non-existence, only implies that their frequency has habituated people to them; and that, therefore, they have ceased to excite the indignation, or to be visited by the obloquy, which attends similar offences in England.—That country is the most demoralised where vice meets the fewest censurers. You must not judge Englishwomen by the specimens Lord Charles Fitzhardinge has named; or by some of those you meet in the *coterie* of the Comtesse of Hohenlinden. These form the exceptions to the female propriety which, be assured, exists to a greater extent among the women of this country than in any other—a fact, of which the reprobation with which the conduct of the erring few is visited, furnishes the most undeniable proof."

"But I do not admit that impropriety of conduct meets with this reprobation," answered I; "*au contraire*, I assert that no where is it practised with such impunity as here."

"Why will you judge England so superficially, Miss Montressor? and Englishwomen, by the *clique*, (for it is nothing

more,) termed exclusives? which, like an unhealthy excrescence, has grown out of the repletion produced by excess of luxury. The individuals composing the circle by which you judge, form, I repeat, the exception to the general rule. They act as if they considered themselves not amenable to the laws of society; and have established a little republic of their own, to oppose the government they could not subvert. This *clique* stands apart, and long may it continue so, from the general mass of the higher class; and is at once our shame, and our reproach, in the estimation of those who, like you, consider its members, in consequence of their meretricious glare of fashion, as specimens of the morals and conduct of the great body of our aristocracy and gentry. As well might you suppose that, because our papers teem with reports of theft, all the English are addicted to that crime, as imagine that, because some individuals in a large community are guilty of errors, all the rest are also culpable; whereas, in no country is theft viewed with more abhorrence, or punished with greater severity."

You see, *chère* Delphine, that I give you *le pour et le contre* in this description, in which I had not the superiority; unlike *notre bonne* Duchess de Mirrecourt, who repeats only the strong part of her own conversations, and the weak ones of her adversaries. Is not this being frank?

Hitherto I have imagined, that goodness and dulness were synonymous terms; a mistake but too often made by those who, like me, look more to the pleasures of society than the happiness of a home. But the truth is, *chère* Delphine, that I have lived too much in the world, and examined too little my own heart, to have become acquainted with the quality of the soil; which, though perhaps naturally, not altogether evil, is covered by an artificial and rocky stratum, that requires a careful and laborious cultivation to render it capable of producing aught but tares.

In *la belle* France one sees little of home; there is even in your language no epithet to express it; for the *chez moi* is associated in my mind with certain evening receptions to some fifty of one's acquaintances, rather than with the domestic circle; and reminds me of your answer to *madame votre mère*, when she accused you of never being *chez vous:*—"*Mais, ma chère mère, je suis, au contraire, très casanière cette année, car je reste chez moi deux fois dans la semaine; au lieu que, l'année passée, je ne restai qu'une.*" Well do I remember those two weekly *soirées*, when your *salon* was filled with the *élite* of all the *spirituel* in Paris; and this we considered being *très casanier, n'est-ce pas?* Yet those were pleasant times, for, unlike the plan adopted here, amusement was not made the business of life, and we paused not to consider, as the English do, whether we were fashionable or unfashionable; or how many persons' vanities we had wounded by excluding them from our *réunions*—a reflection indispensable, as it appears to me, to the perfect enjoyment of my inanimate and *blasés* compatriots.

You ask me, *chère amie*, for a description or definition of a woman of fashion, according to the common acceptation of the term here. They are actresses, who play difficult parts on the stage of life, to audiences who are ever more prone to hiss than to applaud their performances. They lose their individuality as wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers, the sole parts women ought to enact, being recognised only in those fictitious *rôles* in which they may have chosen to exhibit before the public, and for which frivolous mummery, they are paid by slander, mockery, and contempt. They, as you may well believe, are little aware of the sentiments they excite; *au contraire*, they imagine themselves to be admired and envied; and even should some demonstration of the reverse meet their observation, they would, in all probability, attribute it to jealousy and envy.

There are few *mètiers* more fatiguing than that of a woman of fashion. She is condemned to a perpetual activity to maintain her position, as Napoleon was, to make war abroad, to preserve his power at home. Indolence on her part would quickly lead to her deposition, for there are as many competitors for the *rôle* as for that of *premier;* and, like their political parallels, the most incapable are those who are most indefatigable in seeking the distinction.

A woman of fashion must be callous to the domestic affections. How could she fulfil the arduous duties of her post, were she watching by the sick-bed of some dear relative, or consoling some bereaved one? How could she devote that attention to the regulations which, as a patroness of Almack's, she must see enforced, were her mornings devoted to superintending the studies of her children, or overlooking the details of her *ménage?* Luckily for women of fashion, excellent nurses can now be hired, who perform for gold the

duties to the sick which were wont to be fulfilled at the instigation of affection. Humble companions, known here under the appellation of toadies, speak, look, or read, according to order, by the easy-chair or sofa of the mourner; governesses, with "all manner of accomplishments," and no manner of knowledge, instruct the young ladies how to—catch rich husbands; and *maîtres d'hôtel* regulate the establishment, and also the *per centage* they are to receive for encouraging waste and extortion in it.

The woman of fashion, having emancipated herself from the drudgery of household cares, and domestic duties, and, having substituted the services of hirelings, has ample time to perform the self-imposed functions of her office. She can devote a considerable portion of her mornings to looking over and answering the various applications for admission to Almack's. She can reject or accede to the humble petitions, for the success of which young hearts throb, and old ones deign to sue. She can receive the *élite* of her coterie, sit in conclave on the admissibility of those who aspire to enter it, take a *femininely* warm part in the politics of whichever faction she has adopted; and pronounce on the ineligibility of those of the opposite one, without ever having given a serious thought (for ladies of fashion are not addicted to serious thoughts) to the merits or qualifications of either party. Thus, half the life of the being I have attempted to describe is passed; not so much in seeking her own gratification as in endeavoring to impede that of others.

A wish of displaying the powers she has usurped, induces her, not unfrequently, to an arbitrary and ill-natured abuse of it, exhibited in preventing the access of others to scenes where they, in their ignorance, imagine enjoyment is to be found: but where she, in her knowledge, has only too often proved the fallacy of their supposition.

How different is the life of a *grande dame chez vous!* for luckily you have no women of fashion. In Paris, each lady is satisfied with the distinction to which her birth, station, and talents, entitle her. She is only one of a galaxy of stars that shine in the same sphere. She desires to enjoy the pleasures thrown into her own path, but has no wish to exclude others from a participation in them; and is happy in the freedom from all that disagreeable responsibility which is the principal object of the ambition of a woman of fashion in London.

If I have *ennuyed* you by the *tableau* I have attempted to paint, pardon me; and be assured it is hardly more *ennuyeux* than the originals from which it was sketched.

In no country is selfishness so unblushingly practised, and openly avowed, as in England, by a certain set. "Be prosperous and happy, never require our services, and we will remain your friends," is the principle on which society acts here; and this is so well understood, that, for the most part those who stand in need of aid, shrink from soliciting it from their closest and dearest nominal friends.

But this selfishness is apparent in the generality of the actions of my countrymen. If a person, with whom they have been in the habit of associating, leaves England for a year, and then returns, his former acquaintances seldom seek to renew the intimacy. They have, during his absence, filled up his place; they have become accustomed not to look for, or go to him; and it requires a year, at least, with a good house and a good cook, to re-establish the friendships his absence has interrupted.

A man repairs to India, condemned by sad necessity to recruit his shattered fortunes. He goes, casting many a longing, lingering look behind, at the haunts and companions of his youth, with whom he leaves a portion of his heart. He returns with his dearly bought gold, purchased with his best years, and no inconsiderable portion of his liver, impatient to mingle again with those from whom he sighed to part. He has forgotten the characteristic coldness of manner of his countrymen, and approaches each remembered face, with gladness and warmth, when he is chilled by a careless "How are you?" accompanied by an extension of the fore-finger of the right hand, and followed by a *nonchalant* demand of, "How long have you been in town? I have not seen you for some time."

He encounters the same reception from all his old associates, who, reminded by the change in his face of the possibility of a nearly similar one in their own visages, conceive a dislike to him; and, unless he is supposed to possess countless lacs of rupees, and to be fond of play, he is voted a bore, and condemned to seek for society among the golden visaged members of the Asiatic club, who can sympathise in his loss of liver, and expatiate on the comforts of curry and sangaree.

A good cook is the most infallible essential towards the acquisition of popula-

rity in London; and he who allows a dozen guests to judge of the talents of his *chef de cuisine*, once a week, is certain of being considered a person of importance. The stomach is so near the heart, that he who gratifies the one, will be sure to make an agreeable impression on the other: hence, a giver of good dinners is always popular. He may be a man suspected of having perpetrated many evil deeds, and convicted of some; but if he stops the mouths of a certain set of *gourmands* with *fillets de volaille aux truffes*, he may defy censure.

A modern Lucullus, whose fame was less approved than his dinners, was once nearly cut by his friends because he refused to submit to the extravagant demands of his cook, who asked for double the usual wages; and it was not until he had satisfied them, by positive proof, that the successor was quite as good an *artiste* that they renewed the bond of union.

You, who have seen society in Italy, Germany and France, can form no idea of its incongruities in England. Its laws—if laws they may be called—are at once the most absurd and partial; the most lax in the general principles, and unjust in their individual punishments.

Yet this country, which we on the Continent were led to believe was the land, *par excellence*, where female propriety was the most indispensable essential for ensuring a good reception; and the want of it a barrier which neither rank, wealth nor genius, could enable their possessor to surmount—every day's experience proves to be precisely that where its absence is the least severely punished.

Nothing is more usual than to hear, in a morning visit, reports the most injurious to female honor, of divers ladies, and yet meet those very persons in the most fashionable society at night, as well received as if no such rumors had existed. In candor, I ought to add, that such examples are, I believe wholly confined to the exclusive, or ultra-fashionable circle; for it is generally admitted, that there is to be found among the English aristocracy some of the brightest models of female purity and decorum. But these mix rarely with the *clique* self named exclusive, who are for the most part composed of the impoverished *noblesse*, coquettes of doubtful, or, rather *not* doubtful, reputations, silly aspirants to notoriety, imagining that unflattering distinction to be a species of celebrity.

Such are the persons who assume to give the tone to society in London: judge then, what that tone must be! It has all the frivolity and *légèreté* of the Parisian circles; but not the *esprit*, vivacity and ease, that characterise them; and above all, not that attention to *les bienséances*, which in France precludes a woman from violating *les convenances de société*, however she may in private be deficient in morality.

I should like to have an opportunity of judging all the various classes of society here, being as you are aware, *un peu philosophe;* and rather given to study the bipeds that compose the different grades.

Madame de Staël compared the English to the favorite beverage of the lower order—porter; the top all froth, the middle good, and the bottom dregs. This simile contains, I believe, more truth than is to be found in many of the paradoxical comparisons of that highly gifted woman, who sometimes played with her genius, as our favorite Malibran does with her voice, more to surprise than please.

The middle class here possess, I am told, all the advantages of education, and refinement, exempt from the demoralisation that, but too frequently, accompany and sully them; an exemption which even I, with all my philosophy think is to be attributed to the influence of religious principles, and to the habits of discipline and decorum, which they never fail to engender. Yes, *reflexion faite*, I am compelled to acknowledge, that all I have seen of other countries and this, has led to the conviction, that religion is the best guarantee for the prosperity and stability of a nation.

Literature, and the fine arts are, I understand, generally and successfully cultivated by the class to which I refer; and their humanising effect no one can doubt, who has witnessed the charms they diffuse over the monotony of the domestic circle. Accomplishments are not sought by this section of society for the purpose of display; they are acquired as furnishing sources of occupation and enjoyment, and yield both. There is one folly, however, which I hear ascribed as peculiarly appertaining to them; and that is, an assumption of belonging to the upper class. Each grade cherishes a similar belief, which causes subdivisions of society more gratifying to the puerile vanity of the individuals who compose them, than conducive to general habits of agreeable intercourse.

Each hour that I spend in London presents to me some new feature in society, totally different from what I have witnessed in other countries. Among the most

remarkable, is an inordinate love of scandal, that induces its votaries to give credence to any report, however exaggerated or improbable. Scandal reigns here unbridled; and unredeemed by the wit which renders it so *piquant* with you in France, that in listening to some *on dit plien de malice*, one is self-excused for the smile it excites. Here there is no such varnish to the crude ebullitions of ill-nature and envy, that render fashionable society as disagreeable as it is dangerous. Every one seems disposed to put the very worst interpretation on the actions of his or her acquaintance; and never to be more amused than when listening to, or detailing, the errors attributed to them.

This peculiar taste for scandal in my compatriots is so well known, that it has become a staple commodity of traffic; journals have been established to retail it; and the more pungent the satire they contain, the more extensive is their sale. Who could resist reading an attack on some dear friend, some "poor dear lady This, or Mrs. That, so horribly shown up on Sundays!" The men gloat over the papers in their clubs, consoled for the censure on themselves by that on their associates; and the women peruse them in the privacy of their *boudoirs*, or dressing-rooms, disclaiming among their acquaintances, "ever having seen the abominable paper."

In London any woman in a brilliant position, may lose her reputation in a week without having even imagined a dereliction from honor. There is so much *médisance* continually going on; people, are, at once, so idle and malicious, that they seize with avidity on every new subject of scandal; and repeat it so often, that they end by not only making others believe, but by believing it themselves.

A gentleman being seen thrice with a lady in public, and as many times with her husband, is sufficient to lay the foundation of a superstructure of scandal that will defy the possibility of refutation.

Each individual of the idle and malicious persons who love to propagate such tales, will repeat, wherever they go, "Have you seen Lord D—— and Lady E——? How they are showing themselves up! they are never asunder!

This slander circulated at three or four clubs, where female reputations are lost with as much facility as fortunes, and retailed at half-a-dozen fashionable parties, sets the whole town talking; and poor Lady E—— finds herself the general topic, because she was thrice attended by Lord D—— in public, though perhaps in private they had never met once.

Lord E—— is then held up either as a dupe, or as an accomplice in his wife's guilt; for guilt is immediately presumed. He is pitied by one, blamed by another, and laughed at by nearly all; for even the pitiers cannot resist a laugh at a dishonored husband. Lady E—— is cried up, or rather cried down, as a most vile and vicious woman, though an idea of vice had probably never entered her head; or else she is compassionated as a victim to the carelessness of a husband, who was so wicked as to permit her to be thrice attended in public by Lord D——, and who had himself been seen twice arm-in-arm with that nobleman, an occurrence which is received as a proof of his cognisance of the *liaison*.

The lady's reputation is gone, the husband's character suspected, the supposed lover is envied by his contemporary *beaux;* and the affair furnishes conversation until some other reputation is offered up as a sacrifice on the altar of scandal.

Lady E—— is not, however, expelled from society by her supposed guilt. Oh, no! as long as her husband countenances her, she is received as before; her acquaintances, being content with proclaming her fault, desire not its punishment. If she happens to have a good disposition, her consciousness of innocence disposes her to believe every accused woman equally free from guilt as herself. She, consequently, pities, and associates with some of the most unworthy of her sex: and so puts the seal on her own supposed culpability. If, on the contrary, hers is not an amiable nature, this undeserved bereavement of reputation will make her slight the substance of the virtue of which she has lost the shadow: and she ends by becoming what she was previously only suspected to be. This is the state of London fashionable society, where appearances alone are judged; where not cause, but effect, is denounced; and where not crime, but its exposure, is punished.

Instances not unfrequently occur of women, free from any more serious charges than levity and imprudence, being subjected to the penalty that ought to be awarded to guilt alone. I refer to cases where the reports circulated through coteries and clubs are afterwards inserted in newspapers; one of which, containing the scandalous charges, is sent by some malicious person to the husband.

His *amour propre*, if not *amour* for her, is incurably wounded. If he is a weak man, and the majority of fashionable men are weak, he concludes that her conduct must have been indeed glaringly indecorous, or it never could have obtained such odious publicity; not reflecting, that the statement he has perused is only an exaggerated version of the gossip of society, founded on no more solid basis than the unmeaning attentions he has himself beheld without alarm or censure. He recalls to mind every incident, however trivial, connected with her general demeanor; and none of them are now viewed impartially.

Influenced by his irritated vanity, he has already prejudged and condemned her; without any proof, save the slander of a newspaper, confirmed, perhaps, by an indelicate and injudicious appeal to his domestics, who have drawn their conclusions from the same source.

These very domestics, who had never attached an idea of culpability to her conduct until they had read the flagrant statements of it, now become spies, curious to satisfy themselves of the existence of the guilt they imagine.

Her looks, words, and actions, are narrowly watched. Every note received, every male visiter admitted, becomes to their jaundiced optics, presumptive conviction; so that, when questioned on the subject, they report rather what they believe, than what they have seen.—Thus, a chain of evidence, based on erroneous conclusions, establishes a legal case: and the victim is expelled from society, seared and branded with dishonor, though perhaps free from crime, who might, if countenanced by her husband, have continued in it, though universally believed to be culpable.

It is not thus in France or Italy, where women, in losing one virtue, are not necessarily exposed to the loss of all. There, our sex are saved from the necessity of hypocrisy; and are not compelled to pull down the reputations of their contemporaries, in order to erect on the ruins a pedestal for the elevation of their own.

So few women in fashionable society here can afford to be merciful to others, that they are often led to a severity they are far from feeling, to avoid incurring the imputation of impropriety. It is never the guilt or innocence of the accused that is made the point of debate as to her reception; it is, simply whether Lady So-and-so, and a certain *clique*, will countenance her. As it is only the perfectly virtuous and irreproachable that can risk being lenient, you may conclude that, in the exclusive circle, few are the examples of mercy: but, *en revanche*, innumerable are the instances of forbearance towards those whose amatory adventures furnish the daily topic, and who are blessed with husbands whose charity covereth a multitude of sins.

You ask me whether English husbands are, in general, *bons et aimables? Pas du tout, ma chère; tout au contraire.* They are, as far as I can judge from the specimens I have seen, the most selfish beings imaginable.

Numerous are the examples pointed out to me here of men who, a year ago, were the most passionate lovers to their wives, yet who now scarcely conceal the symptoms of the satiety they feel, even from the lately cherished objects that excite it. Men of large fortunes rarely marry from pecuniary motives in England: not that they are exempt from cupidity; very much the contrary is the case; but because heiresses are scarce—estates being generally entailed on heirs-male. It is only when some rich *parvenu* has a daughter whom he wishes to engraft on a noble stock, that great fortunes are to be obtained by marriage; when the gold acquired by trade returns to support the exhausted coffers of the aristocracy, whose prodigality assisted in its accumulation.

The unmarried men in London are remarkable for a degree of selfishness, indulged even to an oblivion of all else, and for a prudent forethought, even in their affections, not so much the result of wisdom, as the dictate of this all-engrossing egotism. Venus herself, *without* a fortune, could hardly tempt them to wear any other fetters than those of her cestus; while a very Gorgon, *with* a large domain, would soon find them eager canditates for the hymeneal chains. They regard every young beauty with distrust and alarm, as having designs on their freedom; or as being likely, by their fascinations, to tempt them into a rash marriage, which they consider as the premature grave of their selfish enjoyments. They look on dowerless wedlock as on death, a misfortune to be encountered perhaps at some remote period, when age and infirmity prevent the pursuit of pleasures, or satiety has palled them. With the distant prospect of settling down at least with some fair young being, who is to be the soother of his irritability, and the nurse of his in-

firmities, the man of pleasure systematically and ruthlessly pursues a round of heartless dissipation; until his health is broken, and his spirits jaded, he selects his victim, and, in the uncongenial union (which, like the atrocious cruelty of Mezentius, chains the living to the dead,) seeks the reward of his selfishness.

The men forming the upper class generally marry for what they term love, which is nothing more than an evanescent caprice, an *envie* to possess some object not otherwise to be obtained. They are so little in the habit of denying themselves any thing they conceive necessary to their pleasure, that one of their race makes little more difficulty of marrying the girl that has struck his fancy, than he does of buying some celebrated horse, for which he has to pay an extravagant price, and probably gets tired of one as soon as the other. During the first brief months—say three or four— of his union, he considers and treats his young wife, *not* as the dear friend and companion of his life, the future mother of his children, but as an object of passion; to be idolised while the passion continues, and to be left in loveless solitude—cast, like a faded flower, away—the moment satiety is experienced. She has been indulged to folly, doted on to infatuation, for three months; and then, spoiled by flattery, and corrupted by unwise uxoriousness, she sees herself first neglected, and ultimately abandoned, to bear, as best she may, this humiliating, this torturing change. If she loves her husband, jealousy, with all its venomed pangs, assails her young breast. She knows how ardently, how madly, he can adore, compares his present undisguised coldness with the fervor of the happy past, and concludes (not in general without cause,) that another object has usurped her place in his heart.

Love, pride, and jealous rage, are now in arms; and how strong must be the virtue, and how steadfast the principles, that enable her to resist the temptations offered by vanity and vengeance! Reproaches or tears await the inconstant at home: his selfishness makes him loathe both, and he seeks abroad a *dedommagement* for the *ennui* they produce. The result generally is, that his wife either breaks her heart or her marriage-vows, or sinks into that humiliating and humiliated being, an unloved and unpitied hypochondriac; who details her wrongs and maladies, in a whining tone, to the vegetating dowagers and spinsters who have no better occupation than to listen to the tedious catalogue.

How many such women may be seen in society, bearing the barbed arrow of disappointment in their hearts—or, worse, forgetting in flirtations, the neglect that at first wounded! How many count the weary hours in a solitary home, till daylight sends back the careless husband, with temper irritated by unsuccessful play, or excited to uncongenial gaiety by having won—unthinking that the next night will, in all human probability, see dispersed the gains of this! Does a wife indulge in reproach, she becomes an object of dislike; and if she endures in silence with a paler cheek or heavy eye, these physical symptoms of what is passing within are considered as so many tacit offences against her liege-lord, who thinks it hard that he cannot ruin his fortune and health, if it please him so to do, without his wife, forsooth, taking it to heart.

Better were it, in good truth, to be condemned to the fate said to be decreed to elderly spinsters—that of leading apes in a place not "to be named to ears polite" —than to be joined to brutes on earth. And yet, in spite of such examples as those to which I have referred, our English young ladies are not alarmed nor deterred, from using every possible means of entering the pale of matrimony; each, probably, supposing that other women have failed through the want of those attractions which she believes herself to possess, and which *must* retain their empire over him who is to be her lord. A few months of marriage dissipate the flattering illusions she has indulged; and, in proportion to the sanguine hopes she nourished, will be the bitterness of her disappointment.

Those women only escape this fate who, marrying for wealth and station, regard the husband by whom these coveted *agrémens* are obtained, as an appendage inseparable from them to which they attach no other value than as the medium of their acquisition. Hence, no other country holds forth such inducements to women forming mercenary marriages as does England, by displaying the brief duration of that affection which offers the strongest obstacle to them.

The same gross selfishness that led the fashionable man to marry, leads him, also, to fresh indulgences of his passions. He becomes a confirmed libertine and gambler (for the two vices generally meet in the same polluted heart,)and, having wasted

youth, health, fortune, and not unfrequently fame, he returns to his cheerless home to inflict his dulness and despondency on the woman he has demoralised, and whose peace he has destroyed.

Lycurgus showed a profound knowledge of human nature, when he decreed a law, prohibiting husbands from seeing their wives in the day, during the first year of their marriage. He meant to guard against the danger of satiety, that perilous rock, on which so many gallant vessels have foundered in the port of wedlock. Occasionally, however, modern English husbands are, perhaps, actuated by a similar knowledge of human nature, and a still more potent belief in the advantages to be derived from absence, when they remain away all night from their homes, as well as the greater part of the day. *This*, probably, is the sole cause why the fashionable clubs are filled with Benedicts every night —at least, it is but charitable to suppose that such is their object.

These very clubs, too, furnish another and powerful antidote to matrimony. The luxurious sensualists who frequent them, being, for the most part, gastronomers, who prefer a well-dressed dinner to the best-dressed woman in the world, are well aware that the *recherché* repasts, with "all appliances to boot," to be obtained at clubs, at a price within their reach, would be totally unattainable in a *ménage* of their own, except by the relinquishing some other extravagance. They think no woman worth the sacrifice of those delicious dinners, *en garçon*, the well-iced wines, gilded *salons* brilliantly illuminated; and, above all, that *facilité à vivre sans géne*, which they imagine female society precludes. How resign those luxurious suppers, that render a man as unwilling as he is unfit for the privacy and quiet of home? How abandon the excitement of the hazard-table after, where thousands are risked?

They have calculated, for such men are prone to calculate, that the great business of existence, which, according to their views, consists in eating, gambling, and gossiping, can be more easily and cheaply indulged at Crockford's than the common comforts of life can be enjoyed in an establishment of their own: *ergo*, they are *célibataires par calcul;* and powerful indeed must be the charms of her who can win them from their preconcerted plan of selfish pleasures.

But if won, brief is the duration of their abstinence from the exciting pursuits of their bachelor days. A few short months passed, the Benedict returns to his former haunts, rendered now more attractive by the contrast they afford to what he considers the monotony of home; where, as I have previously mentioned, the luckless wife is left to lament in solitude, or to forget in crowds, the brevity of her dream of conjugal felicity.

A young man of fashion, for to such only does my censure apply, thinks that certain expenses are indispensably necessary to his happiness, The cost of a wife, he calculates, must diminish the means of gratifying his personal luxuries; therefore he will not marry until he shall have lost the taste and activity for shooting, hunting, and yachting. Then, however, the funds appropriated to these expensive pursuits may, he thinks, be directed to the support of a matrimonial establishment.

How could a young man of fashion exist without a shooting-place in the country, with a train of keepers to preserve his game, and dogs to run it down, whatever may be the cost? A moor in the Highlands of Scotland, for grouse-shooting, it would be impossible to forego; and a party to partake its amusements must be assembled. This gratification is obtained at the sacrifice of several hundreds; but the payer has the pleasure of reading in the papers that he and his guests shot so many hundred brace of birds on certain days: and *he* is satisfied.

Many are they who frequent the Highlands with little or no desire for shooting, but who, having no rational pursuit, are at a loss to know how to employ the two months that intervene between the close of the London season and the opening of the hunting one; consequently, at the mandate of fashion, seek this mode of getting rid of time.

The young man of fashion *must*, therefore, hunt at Melton; and to do so, with "decent dignity," requires an establishment of grooms and helpers that would astonish Nimrod himself, could he behold them; and the bills for which seldom fail to astonish the purses of their owners.

But it is not the horses and grooms alone that consume thousands at Melton; the *chasseurs* find that French cooks alone can produce such banquets, as they require to recruit their exhausted frames, and collect at their tables the "best society."

During the interminable evenings, the chase of the day furnishes the inexhaustible topic of conversation, each biped arro-

gating to himself the merit that belongs solely to his more intelligent quadrupeds. Prolix details of asserted equestrian prowess—each narrator the hero of his own tale—enlivened by episodical histories of their favorite hunters, past and present, fill up the hours that intervene between dinner and the period of retiring to bed: unless cards or dice are introduced, to diversify the rational mode of whiling away the drowsy hours.

Many of the *chasseurs* at Melton are as little partial to hunting as those who frequent the Highland moors are to grouse-shooting. The truth of this assertion is best proved by the joyous alacrity with which, the moment a frost sets in, they rush up to London, like boys released from school, and plunge into all the amusements and dissipation of the metropolis, until a thaw sends them down again, with lengthened faces, and shortened purses, to renew their sport.

How often is the thermometer examined with wistful eyes, and an approach of the freezing point hailed with pleasure! You will naturally wonder why so heavy an expense as a hunting establishment is incurred, if they who entail it on themselves like not the amusement. Fashion, ostentation, and the puerile desire of even that species of celebrity which this extravagance can acquire, furnish the inducements; added to the reflection of the utter impossibility of otherwise filling up the winter months.

You must not, however, conclude, that all who hunt at Melton pursue the amusement from the mere desire of being *à la mode*, or from idleness; for some men are to be found there, who really enter into the sport with a true zest, without making it the subject of all their thoughts and conversation. These exceptions to my censure are admirable specimens of the true English character—bold in the field, and gentle and well-bred out of it. Dispensing a refined hospitality to their friends, and encouraging the race of those fine horses, which are a characteristic boast of my country, but not assimilating themselves to those animals, by utter usefulness, save in the field.

The many who do not really enjoy the hunting pursue it in emulation of the few who *do*—nay, affect to like it so passionately, that it is only as I have before said, the gratification which the setting in of a hard frost excites in them, that betrays the real state of their feelings on this point. To such self-imposed sacrifices will men submit from vanity.

Five months at Melton, passed in the intellectual and edifying manner I have described, requires an expenditure of some thousands; and the London season which follows it demands scarcely less.

A bachelor's house in some square or street near the Park, tastefully decorated, and luxuriously furnished, receives the Meltonian *chasseur* in April. He subscribes to an omnibus box at the opera, and to one at most of the theatres *à la mode;* frequents all the places of fashionable resort; enters into a praiseworthy competition with his contemporaries, as to who shall give the most *recherché* dinners every day; and sports equipages, that would drive to despair a Parisian *élegant*, so perfect are they in their details, and so faultless in the *ensemble*.

When the season draws near a close, the man of fashion departs for his yacht, which, in the luxuriousness of its accommodation, and splendor of its decoration, far surpasses the famed galley in which Cleopatra sailed down the Cydnus.

What time has such a man as the one whose avocations I have attempted to describe, to bestow on a wife? or what funds, not appropriated to his own personal gratification, to meet the additional expense she would unavoidably create? No; the individuals who form the *genus* of which I have sketched a specimen, know that a wife, however amiable, or delightful, would only be an obstacle to the pursuit of their selfish pleasures; and, therefore, sedulously avoid matrimony.

The following lines were given to me, the other day, by Lord Charles Fitzhardinge, descriptive of the miseries entailed on a man by marriage; and they are so expressive of the feelings of all this sort of men here, that I send them to you:

YOUR WIFE.

"Who meets you in your days of youth,
Dreaming of joy and hope, forsooth,
And makes you plight to her your truth?—
Your Wife.

"Who greets you with the smiles most bland,
Until a flame of love is fann'd;
And you, poor fool, demand her hand?—
Your Wife.

"Who, when the Gordian knot is tied,
Ere yet she ceases to be bride,
Casts all her winning ways aside!—
Your Wife.

"Who jealous is of each past flame,

She ever guess'd or heard you name!
And counts them o'er with sneer and blame?—
Your Wife.

"Who says they all were perfect frights,
And in defaming them delights
To pass whole days—nay, often nights?—
Your Wife.

"Who, as you cool, grows still more fond,
And strains to bursting wedlock's bond,
Till you would joyfully abscond?—
Your Wife.

"Who forces you to dine at home,
When you to Crockford's fain would roam
To feast beneath his gilded dome?—
Your Wife.

"Who gives you soup—ye gods, what stuff!
And fish, of which the smell's enough!
With mutton cutlets, cold and tough?—
Your Wife.

"Who gives you wine, that ice ne'er knew,
To wash down each unsav'ry stew;
And talk—how little sav'ry too!—
Your Wife.

"Who has the children—'pretty dears!'—
To come when the dessert appears;
And with their *bon mots* fills your ears?—
Your Wife.

"Who forces you, for quiet's sake,
Appointments with choice friends to break,
Hoping, at last, escape to make?—
Your Wife.

"And, while, in pensive revery,
You think of where you wish to be,
Who quarrels with your gravity?—
Your Wife.

"Who, when at length you rise to go,
Reproaches loud and deep lets flow,
With tears that spring from rage, not wo?—
Your Wife.

"Who lets you find 'twas all in vain
You starved, and gave up iced champagne,
For one determined to complain?—
Your Wife.

"Who selfish is, and void of tact,
Refusing aye to let you act,
As though you *garcon* were, in fact?—
Your Wife.

"Who thinks a husband—'there's the rub!'—
Should give up living at a club;
And if he won't, will pout and snub?—
Your Wife.

"Who is it that detests your friends,
Accusing them of selfish ends;
And censure on their faults expends?—
Your Wife.

"Who jealous ever is of you,
And yet will have a lover too,
In spite of what you say or do?—
Your Wife.

"Who gets shown up each Sabbath morn,
With reputation sadly torn,
While you're pronounced a blockhead born?—
Your Wife.

"Who runs you into debt each day,
Although she knows you've lost at play,
Caring not whether you can pay?—
Your Wife.

"Who every bright illusion rends,
Proving you never could have friends,
'You were a dupe?'—at least, pretends
Your Wife.

"Who tells your faults to every dame
She meets, exposing you to shame,
Till half the town rings with your name?—
Your Wife.

"Ye Benedicts of Fashion, own
Here's no exaggeration shown:
The miseries I relate you've known—
Through Wives."

The love of money, and deference to those who are imagined to possess it, is another striking peculiarity of my compatriots. He, or she, who can boast of wealth, no matter how obtained, is sure of being well received in society; though such persons may be illiterate, ill-mannered, and not immaculate in reputation. On observing certain individuals, in the circle styling itself exclusive, whose personal merits would never have gained them admission, my ignorant queries as to the why, and wherefore, have been replied to by the assertion, that "he or she was immensely rich;" a reply considered amply explanatory.

"Then he, or she, is probably very generous?" asked I, in my simplicity, supposing that a lavish expenditure on a *clique* proverbial for the derangement of the finances of its members, was the secret cause of the reception of the said rich individual.

"No, quite the contrary," has been the answer; "he is *très avare*, I can assure you:" for no one better knows the value of money, or is less prone to make a generous use of it, than he who has no other recommendation.

But what is still stranger, this same reputation for wealth is considered an excuse for the economy which a deficiency of income alone ought to justify. A man known to be rich may give, not only few, but remarkably bad dinners, and wines whose execrable quality all condemn; yet, still, the very people who would unceremoniously decline a far less objectionable repast, if offered by one of limited means, will freely eat the one, and drink the other, because—the donor is affluent. The parsimony of the wealthy excites no murmurs: people like to dine with them, and to have them at their own boards; why, or wherefore, I cannot discover, unless the feeling may arise in a superstitious desire of consorting with those who are favored by fortune.

So well understood is this inordinate

respect for riches in this country, that not a few instances have been known of men who, with only a moderate income, have, by the stratagem of pretending to possess a large one, gained a consideration and an ascendance in society, which they otherwise could never have acquired. "Mr. So-and-so is certainly a *millionaire*," was the excuse for a man of vulgar habits being seen every where, until his death revealed the fact of his supposed million being only a hundred thousand pounds; a fortune more than amply sufficient for all his desires, but the reputation of which would not have attained for him that preponderance in the world which he ambitioned.

Can it then be wondered at, that, seeing the influence wealth bestows, people are more anxious to possess, than fastidious in the mode of acquiring it? Hence, speculations the most unscrupulous, and actions the most reprehensible, are undertaken. If crowned with success, the *mean* is forgotten in the *end;* and if failure ensue, the action, and its consequences pass away from the memories of those who knew the guilt of the perpetrator; for, no one here troubles himself to remember a poor man, except to avoid him.

I have now concluded a sketch, which, though it has no recommendation except its truth, may, I trust, *ennuyer* less than the witnessing the scenes described did your affectionate friend,

CAROLINE.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

YES, my dear Mordaunt, you are right; I love—passionately, madly, love—Lady Annandale; yet it is a love as devoid of guilt as it is destitute of hope. The slightest betrayal of it, would, I am persuaded, exile me from her sight for ever; and I value the friendship with which she honors me too dearly, to risk losing the least portion of it by any imprudence.

You ask me what I propose to myself, in thus abandoning my heart to so engrossing, so ungovernable a passion? This is a question which I have never dared to answer to myself. To meet her every day, to think of her every minute, to dream of her when I close my eyes, and to awake with the blissful certainty of seeing her,—these are my sole objects and aims; and these I may surely indulge without crime.

Mordaunt, if you knew the rapture I experience, when I behold her angelic face assume a more cheerful expression when I approach her; when I observe the deference with which she refers to my opinions, and the sweet and modest confidence with which she utters her own; the innocent delight with which she displays Annandale's hitherto neglected child, and the pride with which she listens to my remarks on its visible improvement and growing intelligence,—you would not ask what I propose to myself!

The happiness of the present seems all I dare look to; and so dearly do I prize it that I tremble to anticipate any change.

She admits me to her *boudoir* during the morning, when Miss Montressor and the child only are with her; allows me to read Italian aloud to her while she draws: and there are moments, when seated in this retired and delicious sanctuary, the ladies pursuing their feminine occupations, and the child climbing my knees, that I indulge the illusion that she belongs to me by the most holy tie, and that the child is ours.

I am too soon awakened from this blissful dream, by Miss Montressor's remembering some engagement to be kept, or some letter to be written that obliges her to withdraw; and what looks strange, is, that these reminiscences of hers always arrive at a *mal-à-propos* moment, either in the most interesting part of the book we are reading, or on the subject on which we are conversing.

"Pray, do not let me interrupt you, good folk," she invariable says—"I shall be back in a few minutes;" and off she hurries.

I resume the book, and, whenever a pause occurs, am charmed with the justice and tact of Lady Annandale's reflections. So much feeling, united to such extreme delicacy of perception, I never before encountered.

Often do I continue to read, until her carriage, or saddle-horses are announced; and we both find that it is five o'clock, when we had only imagined it three.

"How time flies!" does she frequently say, on such occasions; "but where can Caroline Montressor be? she said she would be back in a few minutes."

"Miss Montressor has been in the library, my lady, for the last half-hour, with his lordship," replies the servant.

Does not this look strange? yet it does not seem to inspire Lady Annandale with any suspicions. Is it possible that this artful girl can have any design in thus

leaving her friend and me, two hours *tête-à-tête* in the *boudoir*, and being herself half-an-hour in the library with Annandale? But no; she can have no motive.—And yet it *does* look strange: I must keep my eye on her; for the account Delaward gave me of her morals justifies suspicion.

Annandale seems totally unconscious of my admiration (adoration would better express the feeling) for his lovely wife. He is continually asking me to dine with them, *en famille*, and to make one of all their parties—invitations I have not the courage to resist. Yet there are moments when I fancy I have detected significant glances, or malicious smiles on the countenances of some of the corrupt men, and as corrupt women, of our circle, when they see me by Lady Annandale's side; and I almost determine to sacrifice the intoxicating pleasure of her society, rather than subject her purity, which I know to be as spotless as snow ere it lights on earth, to the risk of one unworthy suspicion. I am more jealous of her reputation than ever husband was of that of his wife; and would die rather than expose it to censure.

She rarely speaks of Annandale; and her manner towards him is cold and distant. Of the Delawards she loves to converse.

"Lady Delaward is indeed a happy woman," said she, a few days ago; "for, in her husband she has found the most delightful friend, the most instructive companion, and the most wise monitor (should she ever need it) with whom woman was ever blessed."

She sighed deeply and involuntarily.

"How vain, then, Lord Nottingham ought to be!" said Miss Montressor; "for you compared him the other day, to Lord Delaward; and, if my memory does not deceive me, gave the preference to *sa seigneurie*," bowing to me.

The cheeks of Lady Annandale became suffused with a bright red; and so visible was her emotion, that, great as was the delight which the knowledge of her flattering opinion of me conferred—a delight that sent the blood circling more briskly through my veins—I was angry with Miss Montressor for having betrayed her confidence.

"I was speaking of Lord Delaward as a husband," said Lady Annandale, with some reserve, and still blushing; and, consequently, could not compare Lord Nottingham, who is yet untried in that character, with him."

"You may, however, accurately judge of Lord Nottingham's taste for domesticity," replied Miss Montressor, "from the daily specimens he gives us of it. Does he not read to us, chat with us, moralise with us, and play with the child all the morning?" Lady Annandale positively blushed to her very temples. "Does he not ride out, drive or boat, with us every day? Does he not escort us to balls, routs, and operas: or spend the evening, *en famille*, with us? And yet, wicked, ungrateful Lady Annandale, after all these decided evidences of a conjugal taste, you can doubt his fitness for domestic life!"

Never was embarrassment more visible than on Lady Annandale's beautiful countenance. She attempted to utter something about never having doubted that I should always fulfil every duty I had to perform; and Miss Montressor resumed:—

"Yes, I am sure Lord Nottingham, notwithstanding he looks so grave" (and here she gave me a most equivocal smile,) "would be a model for husbands, were he once entered into that happy state. See him with little St. Aubyn on his knee, reading to you while you draw, and then doubt, if you can, what a husband and father he will make. Why, I defy that *rara avis*, Lord Delaward himself, to surpass him!"

I looked gravely in her face while she uttered all this ill-timed flippancy, yet could not ascertain whether it originated in *naïveté* or malice; but, whichever was the cause, the effect—and it was a painful one—was obvious in Lady Annandale's varying color and nervous agitation. Luckily, a servant announced the carriage, and I withdrew; almost hating Miss Montressor for the annoyance she had caused her lovely and sensitive friend.

What if Lady Annandale should become alarmed, now that her attention has been so brusquely called to the subject, by the frequency and length of my visits, and curtail or prohibit them? But why should I anticipate an evil I never could find courage to support? No, she could not be so cruel.

Do I not already, Mordaunt, feel one of the many miseries to which an unlawful passion gives birth? Here am I, trembling at the bare anticipation of being deprived of her society, on the terms I have lately been accustomed to enjoy it; yet not daring to look forward to a continuation of happiness that always seems to me too great to endure.

This it is to love, when destiny has placed an indestructible barrier between

us and the object adored; a barrier never surmounted, but by guilt and despair. I am a Christian, and must never forget that the faith I profess ought to preclude both.

Ever yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

La victoire est à moi, ma chère et belle amie! Yes; this cold, this prudish Lady Annandale loves Lord Nottingham; and with a passion such as only tranquil, concentrated women feel.

I see it in a thousand instances: in the bright sparkle of her eyes when he is announced; in the drooping lid that veils them when he approaches; in her heightened color and embarrassed manner; and, above all, in the increasing reserve and shrinking modesty of her demeanor towards him.

I catch her looking at the *pendule* when the time of his daily visit approaches: nay, I have positively marked the quickened pulsation of her heart, visible even through the folds of her robe, when his step has been heard; which she can distinguish from any other, as I lately had a proof—and this is one of the many certain symptoms in the malady ycleped love.

We were sitting in her *boudoir* at the time he generally comes, when I heard feet approaching, and said, "here comes *le marquis.*"

"No," answered Lady Annandale, "the step is not his;" and her cheek became perfectly crimson when she found my eyes fixed with an expression of surprise on her face. She was right: the step was that of Lord Charles Fitzhardinge, who brought me a note from the *comtesse.*

Lord Nottingham is *un peu bête*, for he appears totally unconscious of the conquest he has achieved; or else he is determined not to avail himself of it. His manner grows every day more profoundly respectful towards her, though it always partook of the Sir Charles Grandison style; and he now approaches her as if she were a queen, and he, the humblest of her liege subjects.

This surely cannot be artifice to dupe me. Lord Annandale *et madame la comtesse* like each other less every day. Her indifference has wounded his vanity, the strongest and most vulnerable of all his feelings; and her reserve and austere coldness to the ladies of the *clique* he is most ambitious to propitiate, has irritated him into opposing her will, by inviting them, *bon gré, malgré*, to his house.

Notre frau gräfinn, who is *si aimable et bon enfant*, when she has every thing her own way, can, as you know, be not *un peu méchante* when opposed. She has never forgiven Augusta for being so beautiful—a crime of deep die, and rarely pardoned by women—and, to avenge it, she has insisted on exhibiting Lord Annandale as *son amant en titre*, which she thinks an *éclatant* proof of her superiority of attraction over the young beauty, his wife, and an infallible mean of mortifying her.

Notre frau gräfinn is, however, mistaken in this last calculation; for Augusta is so perfectly indifferent towards her lord, that she has never, I do believe, remarked his attentions to her rival. The truth is, her own heart is too deeply occupied to permit her observing the movements of others; and she has too little vanity to be wounded by the proceedings which would be most influential with the majority of women.

Notre comtesse is evidently piqued at Augusta's freedom from jealousy: she had expected to reap an *éclatant* triumph from the tears and anger of Lady Annandale; but, these being wanting, she considers her victory incomplete.

She is everlastingly directing Lord Annandale's attention to what she calls *les gaucheries et sottises de son épouse*, which are her terms for designating the reserved demeanor and constrained politeness of Augusta; whose avoidance of her, the *comtesse* resents as an unmerited injury, which she endeavors to excite him to punish.

With this charitable object, she is perpetually asserting *qu'il n'est pas maître chez lui;* a charge so peculiarly offensive to a weak man, that, to refute it, there is no folly he is not ready to commit. The proof of the truth of her charge, she says, exists in the fact, that he no longer dare have his house open, as formerly, for those delicious *petits soupers* that once rendered his home the envy of all the *élite* of fashion.

She wounds his *amour propre*, by continually pointing out the marked indifference of his wife for him; and then she endeavors to apply a salve to the wounds she inflicts, by artfully adding,—

"*Imaginez vous, mon cher, une petite sotte comme elle, d'avoir l'air de ne se soucier pas d'un bel homme comme vous—bien élevé, distingué, et spirituel; vraiment, il y a de quoi faire perde patience.*"

Still the wounds rankle, and he likes

the *comtesse* less every day, for being the instrument to inflict them.

He turns to me for consolation; and I have so thoroughly penetrated into the very inmost folds of his character, that I know how to administer it more efficaciously than any other woman could; who not having the same motives and opportunities for discovering and analysing his weaknesses, could not mould them to her will as I do.

My flattery is administered in small, but judicious doses; much on the principle of the homœopathic system, which first irritates the symptoms of the malady, in order to enable the practitioner to ascertain its nature, and then soothes it. My doses are too small to give distaste; not that I ever found any patients complain of their excess, provided they are amply sugared; but their paucity renders them more valued, and the taker more anxious for a repetition of them.

I extol him more by innuendoes than by fulsome, unequivocal admiration. I decry the look of all men whose style does not, in some degree, resemble his own; and those who most approach this, my implied standard of perfection and manly beauty, I remark, would be indeed handsome, if they possessed such and such features—hair, eyes, or teeth—always particularising those peculiar to him.

A good opportunity was offered me a few days ago of administering to his inordinate vanity. The Comte Walkarinsky, brother to the Comtesse Hohenlinden, has arrived here; and is pronounced, by the ladies of our *clique*, to be the handsomest man ever seen. He certainly is extremely good-looking, and possesses *l'air noble et distingué*, so rare and attractive. When several of the women were commenting on him, I, while assenting to his claim to manly beauty, observed, that his, however, was not precisely the style that I preferred. Then I proceeded to give a minute description *en beau* of Lord Annandale—of course, without naming him—as my *ideal* of perfection, which I saw with a glance he immediately appropriated. You should have beheld him at that moment, to be aware of the extent of self-complacency to which the gratified vanity of a weak man may conduct him: and the overflowing gratitude to which a judicious flattery gives birth.

You know how remarkably handsome the Comte Hohenlinden is: well, *ma chère*, his brother-in-law is infinitely superior: judge, then, how delighted Lord Annandale must have been with my implied compliment. *Notre amie la comtesse*, with her flaxen locks and light-blue eyes, never could be taken for a Polonaise; while *monsieur son frère* with dark sparkling orbs and raven curls, could never be mistaken for any other than a Pole.

Last evening we were surprised by a note, announcing the arrival of Lord and Lady Vernon. Lady Annandale instantly commanded the carriage, in order that she might go and see them; but her lord *hoped*, in a tone that looked more like dictation than entreaty, that she would *not* leave home, for that he expected some people to look in.

"I am sorry to be compelled to refuse your request," replied Lady Annandale, coldly; "but I cannot permit my father and mother to pass their first evening in London, without seeing them."

"What possible difference can a few hours make?" urged *le mari*, with a most marital air; "and will not an early visit to-morrow, answer every purpose?"

"It would neither satisfy my impatient affection, nor my sense of duty," said *l'épouse*.

Milor bit his lip: and *miladi* rang for her shawl.

"You would much oblige me by not going out this evening," said Lord Annandale, pertinaciously returning to the subject; "for it will look so strange to have you from home when ladies come here."

"I should certainly comply with your wishes," replied Augusta, "if my own feelings only were to be sacrificed; but, as my father and mother rely upon seeing me, I cannot disappoint them."

"Then I am to consider that *my* wishes are, in your estimation, utterly valueless?" rejoined *milor*, growing angry.

"I am sorry you should entertain this opinion," said Lady Annandale, as, rising from her chair, the carriage being at that moment announced, she left the room; deputing me *à faire les honneurs pour elle* to the expected visiters.

Her husband, for the first time, was guilty of the rudeness, *purement Anglaise*, of not handing her to her carriage, and allowed her to depart without even a kind message to *le papa et la mamma;* an omission that, I am sure, wounded her much more than the want of politeness to herself.

Before she had time to reach the hall, the carriage of *la comtesse* arrived: and

when *sa seigneurie* entered the drawing-room, her countenance displayed evident symptoms of ill-humor.

"*Eh bien, mon ami! n'est-ce pas, je vous avais dit que votre femme est bien la maitresse chez elle?*"

Annandale tried to explain the motive of her absence: but the *comtesse* with a smile of derision, said—

Bah! bah! tout cela est bel et bon; mais je prevois, qu'en peu de temps votre maison sera la plus triste de tout Londres, et vous, mon cher, le mari le plus subjugé par votre pie grièche de femme. Elle n'a pas même pris la peine de me faire ses excuses quand je l'ai rencontrée dans le vestibule. Mais, au reste, les jeunes femmes Anglaises sont si mal élevées, que cela ne m'étonne pas beaucoup. Ma foi, Talleyrand avait bien raison de dire, que les dames en Angleterre sont si peu spirituelles, que la seule conversation dans laquelle elles excellent, est la conversation criminelle, dont les journaux fournissent trop de preuves."

The *grossierté de notre amie* evidently disgusted Lord Annandale; but I could hardly retain a serious face to hear her reprehending, with such severity, the want of good breeding in others, while she herself was committing the most gross violation of all its laws.

Lord Nottingham came soon after; and, had you witnessed the change in his countenance on glancing round the room and discovering that Lady Annandale was not there, you would have been convinced, as I am, of the deep passion he feels for her.

"Where is Lady Annandale—I hope not ill?" faltered he.

"Oh, yes! vera ill, indeed: so ill dat she see nobody," replied the *comtesse*, before either Lord Annandale or I had time to answer.

"Good heavens! how long has she been ill?" asked Nottingham, with the deepest anxiety painted on his face.

"*Mon Dieu! milor, qu'est-ce que vous avez? vraiment, vouz avez l'air d'un mourant,*" said the *comtesse*, most maliciously drawing Annandale's attention to his friend.

I took compassion on him, and explained that Lady Annandale was gone to her father's, as they had arrived that evening; and, for the first time since our acquaintance, he seemed pleased with me.

"Ten or twelve of the old *habitués* of Annandale House, in its palmy days of bachelorship, now dropped in: but Lady Annandale returned not until they had nearly all gone, and then sought her chamber without entering the *salon*.

I saw that Lord Annandale was really piqued with her—nay, more, that the malice of *notre comtesse* had not failed of its intended effect; for I observed him abstracted several times during the evening.

I am glad that she has saved me the disagreeable, and somewhat dangerous task, of first opening his eyes to the passion of Lord Nottingham for Lady Annandale. I dreaded that the communication would render the communicator disagreeable in his sight; an effect often induced by the power of association. Consequently, I have been hitherto guarded: but *now*, the *comtesse* has *brusqué* the affair, the rest is easy; for Annandale's jealousy once awakened, it will not easily sleep, and will find sustenance in every incident, however trivial.

Adieu, ma belle amie! aimez toujours votre

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

I WOULD have sooner replied to your letter, my dearest Mary, had I not lately been so depressed in spirits, that I had scarcely courage enough for the exertion.

My position becomes every day more painful and embarrassing. Lord Annandale is so wedded to society, and precisely to that portion of it which I can least approve or respect, that, finding me unwilling to sanction the presence of its members beneath his roof, he invites them in defiance of my disapprobation. The Comtesse Hohenlinden is a daily guest; and my marked coldness produces no other effect on her, than the display of a species of rude negligence too pointed to remain unnoticed.

Some evenings ago, I was delighted to receive a few hurried lines, announcing the arrival of my dear father and mother. To order the carriage, and go to them, was the natural impulse; and indeed my impatience would hardly permit me even to wait for the carriage. Judge, then, of my annoyance, when Lord Annandale coldly proposed my postponing the visit until next day, saying, that "he expected some friends to drop in."

To disappoint those who were so anxiously longing to see me, I felt would be

most unkind; though to have obliged him, I would have sacrificed my own impatience, excessive as it was. Lord Annandale's manner of urging his wishes, however, betrayed so much coldness of heart, as not to dispose me to a compliance with them; so I persevered, and went. In the vestibule I encountered the Comtesse Hohenlinden, who uttered some bantering remark on my going out alone; and the reserve with which I received her observations seemed to offend more than correct her; for I understand she complained of my manner to Lord Annandale.

You may easily imagine the joy with which I found myself once more pressed to the hearts of my father and mother; and their gratification at seeing me. I felt, beneath their roof, as if I had found a haven, after having been long exposed to tempest and danger; and only wished I was never to leave them again.

I have grown old within the last few months; years—long years, seem to have flown over my head in that brief period: and I shrink from that world, misnamed the gay, into which I was so eager to enter, with fear and trembling; for in it I have found only disappointment and regret.

Before leaving my father and mother, I asked them to dine with me the next day, being the first invitation I have ever given since I entered Lord Annandale's house; and, I may add, the first dinner in it that I ever anticipated with pleasurable emotions.

What, then, were my surprise and indignation, when I informed him of it next morning, to be told, that it was impossible; for, that he had engaged a party of gay young people, who would by no means suit Lord and Lady Vernon, and who would be quite put out of their way by persons of that age.

I ventured a remonstrance, but was silenced by the avowal, that "the party coming to dinner would vote his house the greatest bore in the world, and himself, the host on earth the most devoid of tact, if they encountered such a very patriarchal pair in it as my father and mother."

Wounded and irritated, I told him that, as he declined receiving them, I should certainly go and dine with them.

"Then you will commit a very ill-bred action," said he angrily, "and expose yourself to very disagreeable remarks, if, after your conduct last night, you again absent yourself from the same guests."

He quitted the room evidently vexed; leaving me to weep over the consequence of my own folly, in having married a man of whose character, feelings, or pursuits, I knew nothing; and who every day proves to me, in a thousand ways, that he is the most of all unfitted to contribute to my happiness.

He has not yet seen, or sought to see, my father and mother, who are evidently offended at this neglect. They have asked me a thousand questions about him, which I have replied to in a manner not to alarm them for my happiness; though all hope of ever attaining that blessing with him has for some time left me.

It is wrong to pain you, dearest Mary, with regrets; but you are the only person to whom I dare disclose them.

Ever yours,

AUGUSTA.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

You were right, my dear Mordaunt; I should have fled from the presence of this too lovely woman, when I first discovered the state of my heart.

That its tumultuous feelings are no secret to others, I have had more than one proof; and the persons who have given them are, perhaps, the two most dangerous in which such a secret could be vested, being no other than the Comtesse Hohenlinden and Miss Montressor—two women who are capable of using the discovery in any way suited to their views.

The *comtesse* is deficient in the tact and good-breeding which characterises Miss Montressor; for, in her desire to do a malicious action to any one whom she dislikes, she will not scruple to commit any rudeness.

She wounds with an axe; while Miss Montressor uses a Damascus blade, so finely tempered, that, though the incision is far more deep, the pain is much less felt.

On entering Lady Annandale's boudoir this morning, I found her pale, and her eyes still bore evident traces of tears. To my inquiries about her health, and congratulations on the arrival of her father and mother, she answered briefly, but, as usual, kindly; yet I fancied I observed a constraint and coldness in her manner very different to its general tone of amity.

"Annandale asked me to dine with you

to-day," said I; "and I have just come from Lord and Lady Vernon, who told me they also are to dine here.

The tears now positively stole down the cheeks of Lady Annandale; and Miss Montressor left the room. I tried to utter some vague words, I hardly knew what, of consolation; and she, wiping away the tears that continued, in spite of her efforts to stop them, still to spring into her beautiful eyes, explained her emotion, by saying, that her joy at seeing her father and mother had made her nervous.

There was a constraint and *gêne* between us, of which, though most sensible of the effect, I could not divine the cause; and she seemed to experience these feelings still more acutely than I did, as she asked me to ring the bell, that she might have little St. Aubyn brought down from the nursery, evidently with the intention of interrupting our *tête-à-tête*.

When the nurse came, Lady Annandale demanded why she had not, as usual, brought the child to her; and the nurse replied, that the footman told her it was her ladyship's orders that Lord St. Aubyn was not to be taken to the boudoir until sent for.

"And his little lordship has been so impatient to come, my lady," added the nurse, "that I could hardly keep him quiet."

"You are always to bring him here every day," said Lady Annandale: "but I shall inquire into this order, for there must be some mistake;" and again she desired me to ring the bell.

To her inquiries as to who had sent the message, the servant stated, that Miss Montressor had told him to deliver it. At this moment, Annandale entered the room, looking extremely out of humor; and, scarcely vouchsafing more than a nod to me, he angrily commented on "the noise that tiresome boy," as he designated his son, "had been making during the last two hours;" the nursery being over his library.

"You spoil the brat," said he, "by accustoming him to come here, and then ordering him not to be brought."

So saying, he briskly left the room, before his wife could utter a word in explanation.

I knew not whether to remain or go away—a suspicion of some treachery on the part of Miss Montressor, in giving the order, having taken possession of my mind, and I could not banish it.

Lady Annandale appeared shocked and wounded by the harshness of her husband, and was silent and abstracted.

Miss Montressor returned in an hour, and, when questioned by Lady Annandale, stated that, seeing how low and nervous her friend had been all the morning, she feared the child would too much fatigue her; and had, therefore, ordered that it should not be brought.

This explanation may be true, and she looked perfectly unembarrassed while making it: but how came Annandale to know that the order had been given, without knowing, also, from whom it had emanated?

These circumstances seem very suspicious to use the leat offensive term that can be applied to them: and more appears to be meant than meets the eye.

On leaving Annandale House, I encountered Lord Vernon, who said, "well, as you are not to dine at my daughter's to-day, perhaps you will dine with me: for I have had a note from her to inform me, that she will dine with us, instead of our coming to her."

I assented to the proposition, though I thought it strange that neither Lord nor Lady Annandale had mentioned any thing on the subject to me; yet such was my desire to meet her who occupies all my thoughts, that I readily availed myself of the invitation.

I presented myself at the usual hour at Lord Vernon's; where, in a few minutes after, arrived Lady Annandale; apologising for her Lord's absence by saying he had an engagement, and could not come.

I was in the embrasure of the window, looking at a print, while this was uttered, and consequently she did not see me; but when she did, she positively blushed crimson, and her confusion was so evident, that I feared her father and mother would observe it.

They did not, however; and attributed her increased color to any but the right cause. She appeared ill at ease, though evidently endeavoring to conceal her embarrassment; and the excessive affection of Lord and Lady Vernon, displayed in a thousand ways, excited her nearly to tears.

This simple and excellent couple are almost patriarchal in their manners; and, unaccustomed to disguise their feelings, cordially expressed all the delight they experienced at having their daughter again at their paternal board.

"I could almost cheat myself into fancying that it was still my darling Gusty," said Lord Vernon, patting her head.

"And am I not so, father?" asked Lady Annandale, faintly smiling.

"Not quite, not quite, my child! replied he, with a mournful shake of the head; "for you know that you *would*, whether I liked it or not, give yourself to another. Ah, Gusty! you don't know how difficult we find it to live without you,"

It was not in Lady Annandale's eyes alone that tears stood at that moment; for her father, mother, and myself, were all alike affected.

"I look upon Lord Nottingham as one of my own family—indeed as a son," resumed the good old man; "for he tried to console me for your loss, my dear child, and succeeded best in the effort, by appearing to regret you nearly as much as we did."

Had you but seen Lady Annandale's face, at that moment. In an instant, her eyes met mine, and their expression of sweetness I shall never forget, nor the bright suffusion of her beautiful cheeks.

"Was he not our kindest consoler my love?" resumed Lord Vernon, appealing to his wife; who, laying her hand affectionately on mine, said "she never could forget how patiently I had listened to all their regrets and commendations of their child."

"Patiently, indeed," pursued Lord Vernon; "why, he seemed just as fond of dwelling on the subject as we were; and not like Miss Montressor, who always appeared to be thinking of something else when we spoke of our absent darling."

How did I wish, during this *scène de famille*, that I stood in the same relation to all the parties present that Annandale does! How happy, how transcendently happy I should be! And may I not, without subjecting myself to the imputation of vanity, say, how much happier *they* would be? for I certainly am more formed for domestic life than is Annandale. But why dwell on such vain thoughts? Happiness like this was never meant for me.

"Had I known in the morning that we were to be a *parti quarré*," said Lord Vernon, I would have engaged a box at Drury Lane, and taken Gusty to see my favorite afterpiece. It would be quite a treat to have her at the theatre under my chaperonage, as in former times, without any husband to remind me that she is no longer all my own.

I immediately offered my box; and the family-coach being ordered, to the great delight of Lord Vernon, we were driven to Drury Lane; where we arrived in time for the third act of *Othello*.

When Desdemona pleaded in vain to her father for forgiveness, Lord Vernon positively grew angry.

"My favorite Shakspeare was wrong in this view of human nature," said the good old man; "he did not understand the heart of a father; it he did, he would have known that a parent *could not* spurn his weeping child. No; this is not natural. Don't you agree with me, my love?" turning to his wife.

"Lord Vernon thinks the hearts of all fathers like his own," said Lady Vernon to me, and looking at him with eyes beaming with affection, while Lady Annandale placed her hand in his.

A large private box, opposite to the one in which we were seated, was now thrown open; and Lord Annandale entered it, leading in the Comtesse Hohenlinden, and followed by Lady Mellicent and Miss Montressor, escorted by Lord Charles Fitzhardinge, and three or four other young men of their *clique*.

I felt annoyed at their presence; and observed that Lady Annandale appeared still more so, as she shrank back behind the curtain. The eagle eyes of the Comtesse Hohenlinden soon discovered us; and the glasses of all the party, save those of Lord Annandale and Miss Montressor, were levelled at us.

The *comtesse* attempted not to conceal the mingled mirth and surprise that our presence excited; and Annandale looked more discomposed than I ever saw him. It was plain that the apparition of her husband and his party had given pain to Lady Annandale. She directed to me an imploring look not to remark their vicinity to her father and mother, who had not noticed it, being wholly occupied with the performance, or commenting on it.

The Comtesse Hohenlinden seemed to be engaged in earnest conversation with Lord Annandale, while, from time to time they cast angry looks at our box. What can all this mean? Perhaps, after all, I was expected to dine at Annandale House, and my presence with its mistress occasioned the apparent surprise I witnessed. But why then, if I was expected there, did she go out to dine? All this is a mystery, to the solution of which I have no clue. Perhaps, by calling at Annandale House to morrow, I shall be furnished with one.

Lady Vernon being fatigued, proposed our leaving the theatre before the afterpiece was concluded; and her daughter, who seemed relieved by our departure, requested that we would leave her at her own door.

As I handed her from the carriage to the hall, I observed her servants exchange looks of suspicion; and then glance inquisitively at the coach, as if to ascertain whether it was occupied.

Such is the dignified reserve of Lady Annandale, that I dared not venture a question to her, though impatiently longing to know—why, if I was not forbidden to dine at her house, she had gone to her father's.

I left off writing to you last night, my dear Mordaunt, that I might tell you the result of my visit to Annandale House. I am more mystified than ever, and know not what to imagine.

On calling at the usual hour to-day, I found Lady Annandale and Miss Montressor, in the boudoir; the former pale and sad, and the latter walking up and down the room, with the air of one who had been giving advice.

"Why did you not dine here yesterday?" asked Miss Montressor, with an authoritative tone; "Lord Annandale expected you, and was offended at having a Banquo chair in our gay party. You were wrong, not in preferring the society of Lady Annandale—*cela va sans dire*—but in *affichant* that preference, by appearing at the theatre with her. Your presence together led to several ill-natured comments and malicious interpretations by the whole party, which not all my tact and zeal could avert; and I displayed no want of either, I assure you. Such imprudence is very injurious to Lady Annandale's reputation; and if you value it, you must be much more guarded."

"Good heavens, Caroline! what do you —what *can* you mean?" asked Lady Annandale, blushing to her very temples, and then becoming as pale as death.

"I mean that you, my dear friend," replied Miss Montressor, "are young and inexperienced, and consequently unaware of the danger to which your reputation is exposed by Lord Nottingham's imprudence."

"I am aware of no imprudence," rejoined Lady Annandale, proudly; "and my reputation depends on myself alone."

I now endeavored to explain to Miss Montressor, how my dining at Lord Vernon's, when I expected to dine at Annandale House, occurred; but she provokingly answered, "that, altogether, it was a very unfortunate mistake, and had done much mischief."

"I will, however," she added, go and write two lines to the Comtesse Hohenlinden, to explain the circumstance, and prevent her, if not yet too late, from retailing her version of the affair to all the town."

She then hurried from the apartment before I had time to say a word, retreating by a private door that leads to her room.

She had not been gone ten minutes, when the other door of the room was attempted to be opened, but in vain. We, for a few minutes passively heard the efforts, concluding that each would succeed; till, finding that they did not, I went to ascertain the cause—when, to my perfect astonishment, I discovered that the door was fastened on the *inside*.

This atrocious act could only have been perpetrated intentionally, and by Miss Montressor; for no one except her had approached that door since I had entered it; and a conviction of the most execrable treachery instantly flashed across my mind.

When I opened the door, the groom of the chambers and one of the footmen were there; and the expression of their countenances fully explained the vile suspicions this insidious deed had induced them to entertain.

Lady Annandale's appearance, too, was most unfortunately, more likely to confirm than check their impressions; for she was greatly agitated, and in an almost fainting state.

The groom of the chambers presented her with a *billet*, and then withdrew, and she confirmed my worst suspicions of treachery, by stating that it was from Miss Montressor.

There is some dark plot hatching against the honor and peace of Lady Annandale, I am now convinced; and I am, probably, intended to be made the instrument of it. Why else was the door fastened inside ere Miss Montressor withdrew? and why write a note instead of coming back in person, if she had aught to say?

This manœuvre must have been practised to furnish the servants with an opportunity of discovering that the door *was* locked. Yes, there must be some vile scheme in contemplation; but what can be the motive? Bad as my opinion of Miss Montressor has ever been, and capable as

I think her of much vice, still I can see no adequate reason for her connivance in a conspiracy, the sole object of which must be the ruin of a person I believe her really to like.

"Leave me, Lord Nottingham," said Lady Annandale, pale as death; "I am not well, and wish to retire to my chamber."

I obeyed her commands; and, as I passed through the hall, observed the servants all whispering and eyeing me, in a manner that convinced me they had formed the most injurious suspicions. Never shall I forgive myself, if, through the frequency of my visits I have exposed the fair fame of the most innocent, as well as the most lovely, woman in the world to animadversion.

Yes, you were right; I ought to have fled from her too dangerous presence when I first discovered that I loved her: but that love was and is so pure, and so wholly devoid of hope, that I madly fancied its indulgence could not profane its idol.

I hate myself when I think, that to me this angelic creature owes the humiliation of hearing a lecture on prudence from the lips of such a woman as Miss Montressor —a woman as unworthy to approach, as she is incapable of appreciating her.

On leaving Annandale House, I proceeded to Lord Vernon's, where I found the good old couple gravely talking together.

"Do you know, my dear lord, we are not quite satisfied with the conduct of your friend, and our son-in-law," said Lord Vernon to me.

"Why, would you believe it," added Lady Vernon, "he has not once seen us since we came to town; for, though he called yesterday and was informed we were at home, he never offered to come in, but merely left his card and drove off." "Sir William Vernon, our neighbor in the country, has been here this morning," resumed Lord Vernon; "and he told us that he saw Lord Annandale, with Miss Montressor and a party of fashionables, at Drury Lane last night opposite to us. Now, only fancy his not having even the politeness to come to our box, if only for half an hour!—I don't understand all this, Lord Nottingham," said Lord Vernon, after a pause; "but such conduct, on the part of your friend argues but ill for the happiness of our darling child."

"I observed she was changed the moment I saw her," observed Lady Vernon; "she is thinner and paler, and her spirits are no longer the same—she, that used to be all gaiety and sunshine. Would to God she had never married Lord Annadale!"—A wish that my heart echoed.

"I must see into all this," said Lord Vernon; "my darling Gusty shall not be made unhappy if I have the power to prevent it. Shall she, my dear?" resumed he, turning to his wife.

Lady Vernon shook her head, as she replied, "Alas, my dear friend! the happiness of children does not depend on their parents; if it did, our daughter would never have known a moment's pain."

I left them expecting a visit from Lady Annandale, which, from the state of evident agitation in which I saw her, I fear she will not be able to make. You will hear soon again from your sincere friend,

NOTTINGHAM.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

AFFAIRS advance here, *ma chère amie*, even more rapidly than I had contemplated. *La belle Auguste est tellement entêtée*, that she compromises herself more than my most sanguine expectations ever led me to anticipate. I should be more disposed to regret her folly if I possessed her confidence; but I am hurt at finding her growing every day more reserved to me: nor will she, though I have frequently probed her heart, acknowledge the passion that, I am convinced, is consuming it, for her *preux chevalier*, Lord Nottingham.

So little disposed is she to repose this secret in my breast, that I can see she resents my leaving her alone with him. It was but a few days ago, that more than suspecting she had had a conjugal *tête-à-tête* with her lord, which, judging from the redness of her eyes, could not have been agreeable, I thought that, with her softened feelings, a *tête-à-tête* with her lover might produce an *eclaircissement* between them. He, of course, as I concluded, would demand some question as to the source of her visible depression, and an explanation of their mutual feelings would ensue. To secure them from interruption, on leaving the room, I charged the footman to tell the nurse that it was her lady's orders that the child should not be brought until she rang for him. I guessed this order would give rise to evil suspicions among the servants, as well as keep Augusta and her Adonis free from interruption until he had declared his passion. But, would you believe

it, *ma chère*, I had not left her boudoir five minutes before she rang for the child; and, on asking the nurse, why she had not brought him as hitherto, the whole story of my interference was discovered. She was more angry with me than I had ever seen her before; for she appeared to have a latent suspicion that I prohibited the boy's admission in order that she might be left alone with Lord Nottingham. I, however, extricated myself from this scrape, by saying, with a most innocent face, that I only acted thus because I saw she was ill and depressed, and that I feared the noise of the child would increase her dejection.

The best of the affair was, that Lord Annandale heard the boy crying violently, and sent to learn the cause; when the officious servant informed him, that "his little lordship cried to go to her ladyship."

"Why the devil don't they take him, then?" asked the kind father.

"Her ladyship has given orders that he is not to be admitted until she rings for him to be brought, my lord," was the reply. This reply has ignited the first spark of a jealousy, not easily to be extinguished, in the breast of his lordship, who happened to know that his *cara sposa* was, at that moment, *tête-à-tête* with Lord Nottingham; as I had gone to the library to ask him for a frank, which *I did not want*, and casually observed, that I had been writing letters in my own apartment. Annandale has lived so much among the most vicious of our ladies of fashion, that it would be difficult to make him believe that two young people of different sexes could meet frequently, and alone, without guilt; consequently, from the appearance, he jumps quickly to the conclusion, and has already, I am persuaded, condemned his wife.

The *comtesse* misses no opportunity of drawing his attention to the *petits soins* of *le beau marquis;* which, though of a most respectful character, are, nevertheless, too unremitting not to be remarked. The dignified reserve of Lady Annandale, so unusual in so very young a woman, *sa seigneurie* affects to attribute to hypocrisy; while, I am convinced, it proceeds from consciousness of a preference that alarms her virtue, and which she thus attempts to repress. *Pauvre petite!* she will, one day, have to thank me for breaking the chains I assisted her to forge; and for enabling her to assume others, which will press less heavily. Yes, she will be a very happy woman as the wife of Lord Nottingham: for, independent of their attachment, which, I am sure, is, or will be, of the most fervent and romantic character, they are both more formed for domestic than fashionable life; and will, therefore, retire to the seclusion of some one of his *châteaux*, without entertaining a single regret for the pleasures of London. The patriarchal papa and mamma of my lady, also, will gain by the exchange of sons-in-law; for Nottingham acts towards them as if already he stood in that relation, while Annandale treats them with perfect *nonchalance*.

The individuals who compose our circle have already commenced commenting very freely on the attentions of Lord Nottingham to Lady Annandale. Their *liaison* is looked on as a thing no longer doubtful, and furnishes a topic of general conversation, and an object for the small facetiousness of the fashionable pretenders to wit. Lord Annandale perceives this; and his vanity, the most sensitive of all his qualities, writhes under the infliction, which wounds not his heart—if hearts such men have.

Little does Augusta suspect that her conduct is the subject of remark, or that her virtue is questioned. How shocked she would be at the bare notion of it!

I told you of her going to welcome the arrivil of her papa and mamma *en ville*, in defiance of the request of her husband to remain at home. This proceeding piqued him exceedingly; but not near so much so as her dining with them the next day, though he had a party, and ladies too, to dine with him. He apologised for her absence by saying that Lady Vernon was unwell, and that Lady Annandale had gone to nurse her—an *historiette* at which the *comtesse* opened her eyes to their fullest extent, and, with that *air goguenard* for which, you may remember, she was so famous, burst into a laugh rather louder than *les bienséances* permit in an English aristocratic circle. Seeing that Annandale looked vexed and embarrassed, I came to his aid, by adding, that Lady Annandale was the most affectionate daughter in the world, and never quitted her father and mother whenever they had the slightest indisposition. He looked his thanks; while the *comtesse* maliciously whispered in Annandale's ear, but loud enough for me to hear, that it was strange so loving a daughter appeared to be so *un*loving a wife.

When dinner was announced, it was discovered that Lord Nottingham, who was expected, was absent; and, as Annandale

has a peculiar dislike to a vacant place at his table, he was not a little discomposed by the non-appearance of his friend.

"How very droll it is," said *notre comtesse*, "that Lord Nottingham has not come; for I heard him last night promise you."

Annandale bit his lip.

"Perhaps, as *miladi* has gone to nurse her mamma, *milord* has gone to keep company with the papa," continued the *comtesse*, with a laugh, which was echoed by the whole party around.

I saw that the host was deeply mortified at this open and indelicate insinuation, though most anxious to conceal his feelings; and, therefore, I changed the conversation, led it into lively subjects, gave utterance to some of my most brilliant *bon mots*, and, in short, played the hostess *à ravir*. I had, at Annandale's request, taken his wife's place at table; and I resolved to make him sensible of the different manner in which it was filled, and how much the gaiety of a dinner depends on the mistress of the *fête*. Yet, while executing this determination, I took care not to throw *him* into the back-ground; but, *au contraire*, drew him out, applauded whatever he said that was passable, and glossed over what was stupid. In short, I put all the party so much at their ease, and rendered them so satisfied with themselves, and *par conséquence*, with me, that Lord Charles Fitzhardinge declared aloud, that I made the most delightful hostess he had ever seen, and was precisely calculated to be at the head of a table that was to give the ton to fashionable society. None of this success was lost on Lord Annandale, whom I detected looking at me more frequently than during all the time of our previous acquaintance, and evidently more admiringly too.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

Ma chère Delphine, I promised in my last to make you *au fait* of the scene at the theatre, and sit down to perform that promise. *Eh bien donc*, we went to Drury Lane in the evening; and you may judge my astonishment when, in the box *vis-à-vis* to us, we discovered Lord and Lady Vernon, Lady Annandale, and Lord Nottingham.

"*Ah, la belle!*" said the *comtesse*; *vous voyez que j'avais raison. Milord Nottingham est avec eux pour tenir compagnie au papa, comme je l'avois predit.*

This remark produced a peal of laughter from all but Lord Annandale and myself: he looked furious, because he felt the ridicule of his position, and the *comtesse* had no mercy on him; while I used my utmost endeavors to put a good face on the business, by discoursing on the attachment of Lord Nottingham for Lord and Lady Vernon, with whom, I added, he had been staying in the country since Lady Annandale's marriage.

This statement, implying an ancient friendship, gave a better color to the affair; and, though it by no means imposed on Lord Annandale, his looks thanked me for it. The *comtesse* pertinaciously observed Lord Nottingham's box all the evening, for it was in it they sat; and showed as much ill breeding as any fine lady in London could display, though they all are, in general, remarkable for this quality—thinking themselves, I suppose, by virtue of their vocation, privileged to be disagreeable.

Our opposite neighbors left the theatre some time before we did; and, when we arrived at Annandale House, the *comtesse* was so indelicate as to ask the porter if *miladi* had returned, and with whom?

"With Lord Nottingham," was the answer, which brought the blood to Lord Annandale's face, and elicited a spiteful observation from the *comtesse*, as to the freedom from *gêne* of any kind with which *les dames Anglaises* managed their love affairs.

I can see that Lord Annandale begins to detest *sa seigneurie*, and no wonder; for she, to avenge her pique at his having married, hesitates not to say things that you or I, with all the malice possible, could not bring ourselves to utter. *Mais tant mieux*, for her *brusquerie* saves me the necessity of making disagreeable disclosures.

When the party separated, Lord Annandale begged me to indulge him with a few minutes' conversation. I displayed some hesitation and reluctance, which made him still more anxious to retain me.

"I wish to speak to you on a very important subject, my dear Miss Montressor; and, consequently, this is no time to stand on idle ceremony, so let me request you will be seated. You must have observed," he added, "the frequency of Lord Nottingham's visits here; they are daily and long—too long not to give rise to idle and ill-natured comments. I have been too

much, and lived too many years in the world, to attach importance to trifles; but when I see Lady Annandale commit her reputation and my honor, it is time I should look to her conduct."

Here I attempted some futile excuses for her; but he checked me, saying, "I am aware that, from your friendship for her, and your extreme good-nature" (the first time I ever was considered good-natured!) "you would wish to conceal or palliate her offences; but, I am sorry to say, they admit of neither excuse nor palliation."

"You surely cannot imagine, my lord," interrupted I, "that, blessed with a husband so every way superior to Lord Nottinham," (and here I affected to look confused at my own warmth,) "Augusta could possibly bestow a thought on him."

"You are too good, too indulgent, my dear Miss Montressor, to think so favorably of me," and his eyes positively sparkled with pleasure. "It is a fact, of which you, perhaps, are not aware, but with which I have been some days acquainted, that Lady Annandale's position with Lord Nottingham has furnished a topic of scandal in the fashionable world; and we must admit that her conduct must have been wholly wanting in decorum, or it never could have obtained this publicity in so short a time. What could be more glaring than her choosing to dine out to-day, when she knew I had company at home—Lord Nottingham absenting himself, too, without even an apology? And then, being seen with her at the theatre justifies the rumors in question; and I shall be rendered ridiculous in the eyes of all London, if I do not adopt measures to put a stop to her imprudence."

"Surely, my lord, you would not do any thing harsh, any thing likely to pain or humiliate Augusta. Consider how young, how inexperienced she is!"

"You are an angel, lovely Caroline!" exclaimed he, seizing my hand and kissing it fervently; "and I only wish that Lady Annandale had your tact and discretion—but of that no woman that I know can boast."

I looked down, tried to blush and appear embarrassed, which, of course, encouraged his boldness, until he unequivocally made me a declaration of love, at which I affected to be shocked; and he repeated his regret that I stood not in the relation towards him that Lady Annandale filled.

"When I saw you doing the honors of my table to-day, my charming friend," continued he, "I could not help being struck with the different effect your influence spread around. Brilliant and witty yourself, you called forth all the agreeable qualities of others; instead of casting a *géne*, if not a gloom, round the guests, as Lady Annandale's reserved manners invariably do. I wish to fill a certain position in society, for which, I flatter myself, my station, fortune, and talents, qualify me; I mean the position of a leader of fashion, making my house the focus of the *élite* of our society. I do not regard this important desideratum with the frivolous feeling of the generality of persons; that is, as a mere object of amusement, or of acquiring fashionable celebrity. No; I view it as a means of obtaining political influence, which our ministerial people have always too much neglected."

Here he looked as profoundly sagacious as if suggesting the mode of carrying the most important political measure; and I affected to consider his puerile fancy, ineffably sapient and momentous.

"Our ministers," resumed he, "arrive at power at too advanced an age to become leaders of fashion. A veteran *elegant* is always ridiculous; witness poor Lederdale; but, as I took office at a period of life when few are deemed capable of holding it," (you should have seen how self-important he looked!) "I may, without any risk of ridicule, unite the rare position of a leader of fashion and a man of business. To effect this great object of my desires, Lady Annandale should be a totally different person. She has the *physique*, but not the *morale*, for a position such as *my* wife ought to hold. You, my charming friend, have both. Would that I could—but it is vain to think of what is impossible."

He does think, and will think, nevertheless, of this seeming impossibility, until it ceases to be one: for his vanity will co-operate with my ambition in perpetually inviting him to the fulfilment of his wish; and, rather than appear as a deserted husband, he will, I am sure, marry again, the instant he shall be freed from his present chains, in order to convince the world that he cared *not* for his former wife, and *does* care for her successor. Every time I attempted to advocate Augusta's cause, he silenced me by compliments on my good-nature. The plea I most strongly urged, to prove the impossibility of her preference for another, was his own superiority. This fulsome flattery

ineffably gratified his vanity; for it is so inordinate and voracious that it would devour any thing. But it did not satisfy him that Augusta was willing to accord him this superiority, for her coldness too plainly implied the contrary: consequently, my seemingly most amiable intervention had not the effect of persuading him to forgive her, but only that of making him value me the more, for appearing to believe that she must entertain a favorable opinion of him. You see, *ma belle amie*, that the "comedy of errors" advances just as I foretold and wished; but when a plot is founded on the vanity of man, it seldom fails of success.

Addio, carissima! votre

CAROLINE.

A note from Lord Annandale, requiring a few minutes audience, has just been placed in my hand. What can he have to communicate? I have not yet seen Lady Annandale so I am all in the dark. I shall resume my letter after I have seen him.

This business advances more rapidly than I had anticipated, or even desired; and, what is very provoking, will sadly interfere with all the schemes of amusement laid down for the closing of the season. *Mais, c'est egal;* it is all in favor of other and more important schemes. Yet, now that the *dénoûment* of my comedy draws near, I begin to feel a little nervous.

I left off with telling you that Lord Annandale demanded an audience, which I granted. I found *sa seigneurie* in his library, in a state of great agitation. He had, it appears, on leaving me last night, entered his wife's dressing-room, with, he says, the intention of seeking an explanation from her; but, I strongly suspect, he was very certain she had been some time in bed. He asserts, that a thought occurred to him (it is only husbands who ever have such thoughts,) to examine her escritoire—the key lying temptingly on her toilet—expecting to find some tangible proofs of the guilt he imagines, when, lo and behold! instead of sundry amatory billets from *le beau marquis*, he finds naught but my lady's diary. This he considered *mieux que rien;* and so it has proved. Fair ladies, while you live, or, at least, while you love, beware of keeping diaries; or if you will do so, hint not at the feelings of your hearts!

Eh bien, ma chére, I judged rightly. Augusta loves Lord Nottingham with all the enthusiasm, all the romantic fervor, of which only a young English woman is capable. Yes, *ma belle*, you French ladies with all your fascinations, and all your sentimentalities (and I give you full credit for possessing both in no ordinary degree,) must yield to the untravelled *dames Anglaises* for that strong and enduring affection which is much less a passion than a sentiment, nursed in secret, and matured in sorrow. The *naïve* expression of Augusta's love for *le marquis*, and the no less *naïve* disclosure of her more than indifference for her liege-lord, have enraged him beyond measure; and, to avenge his mortified vanity, he has determined on exposing her to all the consequences of an open *esclandre*.

Every expression in this unfortunate diary which admits of an equivocal meaning, he has tortured into a guilty one; but I doubt whether any other person could find more in it than an artless outpouring of the secret feelings of a loving, yet pure heart.

This diary will serve to show yet more plainly than all my descriptions could, that *lusus naturæ*, the heart of a young English woman, which foreigners rarely have an opportunity of studying, and—may I, without offending, add?—more rarely have the power of comprehending. He has lent me this diary, so I shall copy it, and send you my transcript. I affected to plead for Lady Annandale, tried to extenuate some passages in this *naïf* record of her feelings, and to soften others: but what could extenuate, in her vain husband's eyes, that crime of deepest, darkest die, the depreciation of himself, so innocently expressed? Her love for another I do believe he could pardon; but her want of admiration for the person he most admires upon earth, self, he never can forgive.

DIARY OF LADY ANNANDALE.

YES! Mary Delaward is right. No woman ever should permit the daily visits of any man. O God! why was the bandage not sooner torn from my eyes? Now, alas! it is too late; the arrow has entered into my soul, never to leave it but with life. This deep consciousness of an unhallowed passion will destroy me; and I feel as if all who behold me could read it in characters of shame on my brow. How am I fallen! To whom can I pour out the miseries of my oppressed heart? Not to Mary Delaward's chaste ear can the rav-

ings of an illicit passion be disclosed: she would shrink from me in horror. To Caroline the confession of my error would only excite some heartless jest on the commonness of my misfortune. She would confound me with the crowd of women whose guilt is not limited to the heart; and I—I that was so proud and so pitiless for their crimes, have lived to experience the dreadful consciousness of a guilty passion—that first step in the rapid descent to vice and ruin.

I knew not that I loved him until the sentiment became rooted in my soul, and identified with my life. While first listening to thoughts that seemed the voice of my own, I dreamt not that danger awaited me.

"Each thought of mine an echo found in his;
Our minds were like two mirrors, placed on walls
Fronting each other, and reflecting back
The self-same objects—such is sympathy."

I fancied, fool that I was, that I only felt for Lord Nottingham the same admiration and deference that I entertained for Lord Delaward. A growing distaste towards the weak man to whom I so madly gave myself, ought to have warned me of the state of my heart, by showing that it was the contrast presented to his mediocrity by the noble qualities of Nottingham which had increased my indifference towards him into positive dislike.

But no, I was infatuated—madly, blindly infatuated, and shut my eyes to the precipice on the edge of which I stood. To count the hours of his absence, to listen for his step, to tremble at his approach, to forget all but him during his presence, and to dread the moment of his departure—this has been my life for months. Mary Delaward must have observed something in my letters, or heard some evil remark, to have induced her to dwell on the danger of male friendships.

That letter first opened my eyes to my danger; yet I had not the courage to break off the daily habit of seeing him. Even now that Caroline has spoken more plainly, and I can no longer doubt the fatal truth that he is dear—oh, how unutterably dear!—to me, yet can I not resolve to separate from him for ever; though that is the only conduct which prudence, duty, and virtue, dictate to me to pursue. How often does the thought intrude, that, when I first saw him on whom my soul dotes, I was still free! and I might have broken off the engagement my inexperience led me to form with a man whom, even then, I felt that I did not, could not love. Why did I not refuse to ratify that fatal compact! I might have been *his* in the sight of God and man; and blessed in, instead of murmuring at, my destiny. It was Caroline's counsel that lured me into this detested marriage—would that the grave had received me before I had formed it!

It is a relief to unburden my heart by committing its overflowings to paper, now that I dare no longer open its secret feelings to Mary Delaward. Time was when I had no concealment from her; but to this state of mental solitude has my own wilful folly reduced me. With what bitter, what vain regret do I recur to the past; and with what dread, anticipate the future! So young as I am, too—how dreary, how cheerless are my prospects! A few months ago, whose were more brilliant? —blessed with youth, health, fortune, station; and, above all, with parents so indulgent as to anticipate my every wish. Fatal, fatal indulgence! All this happiness I have perverted by my own folly. I forced these too indulgent parents to yield my hand to one I did not love; and that one step has plunged me irretrievably in ruin!

While we were in conversation on this momentous affair, a servant entered with letters. One of them was an anonymous one, filled with charges against Lady Annandale; stating that her *liaison* with Lord Nottingham was no longer a secret to the public, and that it was even known that more than one of the servants had found the door of her ladyship's boudoir locked on the inside, when she was *tête-à-tête* with Lord Nottingham.

He read this epistle aloud to me, and was nearly maddened by its contents. I affected to doubt the truth of the statement, well knowing the fact; for I it was who slily turned the key of the door by which company enters the boudoir, before I retreated by the private door used only by Lady Annandale and myself. The letter I suspect to emanate from one of the servants; for the practice is not, I am told, an unusual one in London, on such occasions.

I left Annandale writing to his solicitor to come and examine the domestics, on the subject of the locked door; and, as I know the evidence of, at least, two of them will establish the fact, I have no doubt of the result. I must leave this house before the *esclandre* occurs; for it

might be injurious to my future position in society to be at all mixed up with it. To go to the Comtesse Hohenlinden would not be advisable, for she is in very *mauvaise odeur* here. In addition to this objection, her lynx eyes would quickly discover the newly developed *tendresse* of Lord Annandale for me, and its probable result when he obtains his freedom—an anticipation which would rapidly convert her into an inveterate foe. I, therefore, see no course for me to adopt, but to return to *ma triste tante* in the country; there to vegetate, until a divorce enables Lord Annandale to demand my hand. I shall write, therefore, to my aunt by this post, saying that the air of London disagrees with me, and asking her to send her carriage for me forthwith. This prudent measure will, I know, gratify Lord Annandale.

And now for the most disagreeable part of the affair—an interview with Augusta; *vis-à-vis* to whom I feel certain uneasy qualms of conscience, which nothing soothes but the conviction, that, after all the publicity of this business is over, she will become the wife of the man she loves, and have to thank me for being the cause of her felicity. I owe her a compensation for having urged her into a marriage which she does not like, and heartily hope she will enjoy all the happiness I wish her; for I cannot help entertaining for her a mingled sentiment of pity and affection, knowing, as I do, the goodness and innocence of *la pauvre petite.*

Again I resume my pen; but I make no excuses for this interminably long letter, knowing that you will be all curiosity to learn how this complicated plot of mine works. I found Augusta reclined on the sofa in her dressing-room, pale as marble, and apparently agitated. After answering my inquiries respecting her health by a few brief words, stating the illness her looks but too plainly denoted, she told me that "a most extraordinary occurrence had taken place; her escritoire had been opened, and a diary which she had lately kept (how the poor soul blushed when she named it!) had disappeared."

I looked the very personification of surprise and innocence; could not possibly imagine how such a thing could have happened; asked whether she had searched every place for it; and hoped it contained nothing of any importance. I pitied her visible consternation, as she acknowledged that the diary *did* contain thoughts which she wished no eye on earth to see, save her own. I expressed all the regret imaginable; trusted she would yet find it; and advised the necessity of more caution for the future.

"Do not mistake me, Caroline," said she, gravely; "though I fear I must infer that you have lately done so, from the extraordinary observations you yesterday made to Lord Nottingham on his imprudence in exposing my reputation to suspicion. My honor, and its reputation, I trust, depend, not on Lord Nottingham, but on myself. I may not, when writing down my feelings in the sanctity of privacy, as if pouring them out to *that ear* to which alone erring mortals should have recourse, have concealed the weakness of my heart. But, if my feelings were culpable, my actions were irreproachable. One I could not always command; the other I could, and did."

She looked so proud and calm as she uttered this, that I stood abashed before her; and endeavored to excuse what I had said. How corrupt must that mind be, that could have seen Augusta at that moment, and doubted her purity! Yes, my dear friend, there is something sacred, something almost divine, in a perfectly high-souled and virtuous woman. Heigh-ho! would that all women were so!

I told Augusta that I had just heard from my aunt, who, feeling unwell wished me to return to her.

"I should more regret your departure," said she, "were it not that I think it fortunate for you to be removed from the too frequent intercourse you maintain with the Comtesse Hohenlinden; an intercourse which I consider most disadvantageous to you, my dear Caroline, in every point of view."

Perhaps she was right; but, be that as it may, I was so subdued by the recollection of the unvarying affection and gentleness of the creature before me, and the knowledge of the duplicity of my conduct towards her, that as I remembered we must henceforth be strangers (for the *future* wife of Lord Annandale must not be the friend of the *past*,) a pang of regret and remorse reminded me that I am not so philosophic as I had imagined myself to be; and I felt as if taking an eternal farewell of her, whose destiny my influence had determined. Selfish and calculating as I have hitherto been—and I admit that I have been both in no common degree—yet, I do believe that, were I not convinced that with Lord Annandale,

Augusta never can be happy, and with Lord Nottingham she will, I should even now retract, were it possible; for I could not bring myself to drive this innocent and confiding creature to shame or sorrow. But she must, she will be happy with Nottingham—I will not allow myself to doubt it.

I shall write a few lines to Lord Nottingham without a signature, informing him of the attachment he has inspired in Augusta's heart. To how few men would such a piece of intelligence be necessary, for the vanity of almost all would have anticipated it; but he is too excellent to be vain. How superior is he to Annandale! How very ungentlemanly was it of the latter to open surreptitiously his wife's escritoire, and how indelicate to read and show her diary! This is a proceeding which, even while it forwards my views, I must still contemn; and all right-minded Englishmen, would, I think, agree with me in this sentiment. It displays so clearly, a meanness, and want of high principle, that it leads me to determine on keeping *sa seigneurie* in good order whenever he becomes my lawful property; and I will have a lock to my escritoire that will puzzle him to open it, I promise him. *Addio, cara!* you shall see a coronet encircle my brow, and come to London to behold how well I shall enact the new *rôle* of a leader of fashion, though never forgetting that of

Votre amie devouée,

CAROLINE.

FROM LORD NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

I DEBATED long with myself this morning, my dear Mordaunt, whether I ought to call at Annandale House, or not, to-day. It occurred to me that, if I did not call, the servants might attribute my absence to some consciousness relative to the discovery of the locked door yesterday, and therefore I went; perhaps, too, the hope of seeing her on whom my soul dotes, also influenced my decision. The porter told me his lady was not at home, in a tone (but it might have been my imagination that so interpreted it) which seemed more than ordinarily *brusque*. I asked, whether Lord Annandale was at home? but he, also was denied, though his cabriolet was at the door.

What can this conduct mean? Was the order given by her, or by him? I remember there was a *fierté* in her countenance I never before saw it wear, when Miss Montressor commented on my compromising Lady Annandale's reputation; and the proud and indignant manner in which she repelled the insidious insinuation of that lady, still is present to my memory. Probably that heartless woman's observations have induced Lady Annandale to close doors against me; and, if she have so acted, while lamenting this cruelty, I admit its wisdom. I never should have had courage to tear myself from her sight; for I am become weak and vacillating as a child. This engrossing passion has mastered all my energies, destroyed my best resolves, and left me naught of manhood but its wilfulness.

I have this moment received an anonymous letter in a female's hand—its contents astonish me! It states that I am beloved—yes, fondly beloved—by the woman, the writer is sure, I prefer above all others on earth; that the natural reserve, prudery, or sense of duty, call it what I will, of the lady in question, may induce her to conceal her affection for me; but that I may rest assured that affection exists, and must not despair, though the person who entertains it should continue to repress all external symptoms of it.

This letter is signed, "A Friend," and must, I am sure, come from Miss Montressor. Who else knows or suspects my feelings? And yet what could be the motive of such a communication? I am all bewildered! I will call on Lord and Lady Vernon; perhaps they may be able to throw some light on the rejection of my visit at Annandale House.

I found Lord and Lady Vernon in their library, both greatly agitated, and the latter in tears.

"Look here," said Lord Vernon, handing me a letter; "this is the fac simile of one addressed also to my wife. It is anonymous and contains the most vile and infamous charges against the honor of our child. Yours, also, is assailed; but we know you too well, my dear lord, brief as has been the term of our friendship, to doubt your honor, any more than we do that of our idolised Augusta, on the faith of whose virtue we would risk our lives. —But to have that virtue questioned, and her name thus profaned, is indeed a severe blow."

So saying, he pointed to a pile of newspapers, in which, he said, the most indelicate references were openly made to a sup-

posed attachment between Lady Annandale and myself. Now was it that all the guilty imprudence of my conduct, in so frequently attending Lady Annandale in public, and visiting her daily, appeared in its true light, while I perused the disgusting attacks to which my selfish folly had exposed her; and beheld the shame and sorrow it had inflicted on her excellent parents. I, who knew the world, ought to have foreseen that such must be the result; but, criminal as I was, I closed my eyes on the danger to which my attentions subjected her; and have consequently been the means of having that honor impugned which I would have risked my life a thousand times to defend.

I stood shocked and abashed before Lord and Lady Vernon; for, though free from even a guilty thought with regard to their daughter, my conduct had all the semblance of guilt. The innumerable *liaisons* between parties of my acquaintance, of whose culpability no doubt exists, were all characterised by conduct similar to mine; so that I had injured the reputation of this pure-minded and innocent woman to the utmost extent, by the selfish indulgence of seeking her society in a manner that must have impressed a belief of impropriety on the minds of all who had opportunities of observing it.

"If Augusta should become aware of these vile rumors," said Lady Vernon, "the consequences would be dreadful indeed; her pride and delicacy would be mortally wounded. Oh, my poor, dear, innocent child! in whose pure imagination, a belief, even of the guilt of which she is openly accused, never could find a place against one of her own sex; and to be thus profaned in the eyes of the public!"

Here a paroxysm of tears interrupted the mother; and, as I beheld them chase each other down that venerable, and hitherto calm countenance, where shame had never before brought a blush, I execrated myself.

A note was now delivered to Lady Vernon, and another to her husband. The father reddened to his very brow as he perused it, and anger flashed from his eyes.

"He shall answer for it!" said he, throwing the letter on the table; but at this moment Lady Vernon dropped, fainting, from her chair, and we both ran to assist her. She soon revived; and pointing to the letter, begged that the carriage might be immediately ordered.

"We must go for our poor child," said she, turning to Lord Vernon with a look of unutterable anguish; "the house of Lord Annandale is no longer a befitting abode for her."

"Read these," said Lord Vernon, laying down the note to his wife, and handing both to me. "I will not, Lord Nottingham, so far insult the purity of my injured daughter as to imagine that blame can attach to her; but, with her youth and inexperience, she may, through ignorance of that world into which she was too early thrown, have been neglectful of the appearances which, in the tainted atmosphere of London, are more studied than the reality of virtue. But you, my lord, who knew the danger, surely you have not been so culpable, so cruel towards my daughter and towards us, whom you professed to like, as to have exposed her, by your attentions, to the vile imputations now cast upon her honor? Her unworthy husband —for unworthy he must be, not to have better guarded the treasure we confided to his care, and for believing that guilt could attach to our child—writes to say that it is his intention to seek legal redress, and that he wishes Lady Annandale to leave his house."

"Let us go immediately for our daughter," said Lady Vernon; and she rang the bell impatiently, to order her carriage.

I glanced my eye over the letters, scarcely conscious that I had not even attempted an answer to Lord Vernon. What answer could I make, overpowered as I was with the oppressive weight of regret for the injury I had inflicted on their daughter, and on them? Annandale's letter was cool and collected, containing only a few lines, stating his intentions nearly in the words that Lord Vernon had repeated. Lady Annandale's note was nearly obliterated by tears, and ran nearly as follows —for every line of it is imprinted on my memory:—

"Mother, dear mother! I am accused of a crime of deep dye. Your child is disgraced and dishonored; but *you* will not believe her guilty, though all the world beside may condemn her. If I fancied you or my father could for a moment imagine me guilty, even in thought, of the crime with which I am charged, I could not live. Why, why did I ever abandon you? I am all bewildered, and have but one feeling, one wish left; and that is, to quit this hateful roof, and (*die* had been written, and then half defaced) return with you to the home of my infancy—there to

hide myself from the shame that has seared my very soul, and destroyed for ever the peace of your

"AUGUSTA."

And all this was my work! Oh, Mordaunt, to what fearful results does the indulgence of selfishness lead!

"You will feel the propriety, my lord," said Lord Vernon, gravely, but more in sorrow than in anger, "of our avoiding all intercourse with you for the future."

I attempted to utter something, but he stopped me; and, waving his hand, begged me to remember, that to him no exculpation of the honor of his child was necessary, because he never could doubt it. I felt that I ought to withdraw, and left their presence, writhing under the consciousness that I had inflicted the deepest wound on their peace, and destroyed the reputation and happiness of her who is dearer to me a thousand times, than life itself. I am wretched, my dear Mordaunt, and feel that, could I but justify the purity of Lady Annandale, I would forego the hope of ever again beholding her; though that hope has sustained me ever since I have indulged the fatal passion that has wrought such misery to her.

Ever yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

I HAVE just witnessed, *ma chère amie*, the most painful scene; and my nerves are so dreadfully shaken by it, that I can scarcely hold my pen. I wish I had never embarked in the scheme that has produced all this *chagrin* to persons for whom I really felt no ill-will; for, now that the *dénoûment* of what I intended should be a comedy is at hand, it begins to look more like a downright, earnest tragedy; and I hate tragedies, off or on the stage. But, to resume. Lord Annandale's solicitor questioned the servants: the story of the nurse being forbid to bring the child to the boudoir, and the locked door, came out; and these, coupled with Lord Nottingham's long and daily visits, were considered by the man of law as conclusive proofs, fit to satisfy a jury. Consequently an action for damages is to be forthwith commenced against Lord Nottingham, preparatory to an application for a divorce.

Lord Annandale communicated this intention to poor Augusta, in a laconic letter, containing some imperious lines; and also wrote to her father, informing him of his desire that she should leave Annandale House. He begged of me not to see her, and proposed my going to the Comtesse Hohenlinden's until my aunt sent for me, as it was derogatory to my present and future position, he said, to remain a single day beneath the roof of a woman who had so completely compromised her honor as Augusta had done. I could not resist asking him whether he was not aware that the *comtesse* had compromised hers a thousandfold more? He looked at me with surprise, and then answered,—

"That the actual guilt of the parties was not the point to be considered; but the circumstance, that, in the case of Lady Annandale, not only was the guilt presumed, but the husband had denounced her: whereas the husband of the *comtesse* still countenanced her; and, consequently, her honor was in no degree compromised."

And this, *chère amie*, is the moral of the fashionable world in London!

It appears that Annandale, with his usual *faiblesse*, has kept the *comtesse au courant* of all that he has discovered. I strongly suspect, *entre nous*, that *sa seigneurie*, prompted by jealousy of the beauty, and anger at the reserve and coldness of Augusta's manner to her, has urged him to be still more severe towards his poor wife; though this instigation was unnecessary, for the wound offered to his vanity by the terms in which he is named in the diary, has rendered him implacable. I have ascertained from his own lips, that it was my artful flattery which won his decided preference for me; consequently I have not the satisfaction of thinking, that otherwise he would ever have liked me. Vain, weak, and unfeeling man! if he knew that, even while profiting by his weakness, I despise him, what would he think?

I have received a note from the Comtesse Hohenlinden, which I send to you. What a world we live in!

"*Ma chère* Caroline, poor dear Lord Annandale has informed me of the shocking conduct of *miladi*. Now that it is all discovered and the whole town talking of nothing else, it will be very improper in you to stay a single hour under the same room with a person who has compromised her reputation so dreadfully. She will, of course be cut by every one; and few will pity a lady who was so very prudish and severe towards others. I shall be charm-

ed to receive you, *ma chère, chez moi*, and have ordered an apartment to be prepared. The carriage shall convey you from Annandale House at any hour you will name. I should in person conduct you hither, but I have such a horror of coming in contact with that very naughty woman, or of being even supposed to enter Annandale House while she remains in it, that I dare not go to you. The *comte* is, and with reason, extremely particular that I should not commit myself by associating with any one whose reputation is tainted; and I, also, am fully aware of the necessity of preserving appearances, and not violating *les convenances*, on which the preservation of society so wholly depends.

"I have had a conclave of ladies with me this morning to consult on this terrible affair. Lady Castlemartin declares, that if we do not show a proper severity towards Lady Annandale, husbands will begin to suspect that their wives are lenient from a sympathy with the delinquent. *A-propos de* Lady Castlemartin, she is just now greatly annoyed; for her friend, Lord Eaglesfort, has thrown off her chains, and is about to put on those of Hymen. She is *très en colère* with him; but, I think, not indisposed to transfer her affections to the Marquess of Nottingham, should he be disposed to console her.

"But to return to our conclave. Lady F. says, that if we wish to preserve our own liberty, we must show no mercy to those who manage so ill as to be detected; thereby, more or less compromising all their *clique:* and Lady H. advises, that we at once renounce, not only Lady Annandale, but any woman who countenances her. You will thus, *chère* Caroline, see the necessity of at once leaving Annandale House; and I will take care to have it well understood that you declined seeing its mistress from the moment you heard of her guilt.

"I have written to ask poor dear Lord Annandale to dine with us *en petite comité*. I do so pity him! such a good and kind husband as he was, and so anxious to make his house agreeable; always filling it with the most fashionable people in London. How happy that silly woman might have been, had she only had proper tact! I lose all patience in thinking of her folly.

"*Adieu—au revoir! votre amie*"

What think you of *notre frau gräfinn's* prudery? Is it not amusing? I have detailed all this to you, to postpone relating the painful scene to which I referred at the commencement of my letter, as children put off their tasks until the last moment. *Eh bien, donc, ma chère*, in defiance of Lord Annandale's and the *comtesse's* counsel, not to communicate with Augusta, I went to her dressing-room. I had not seen her last evening, as she sent to say she was too unwell to receive a visit from any one; so I passed the evening listening to the vows of her *caro sposo*, who expresses the utmost impatience to be freed from his present matrimonial fetters, that he may be enabled to put on others, as he says, more to his taste. I found poor Augusta as pale, and nearly as lifeless, as a statue, with an expression of anguish and despair in her countenance, that might have melted a more stubborn heart than mine. How truly did I wish at that moment that I could accomplish my own schemes without occasioning her a moment's pain! *Mais, helas!* that is impossible. I am a strange creature: ready to plot, but not capable of beholding the sufferings I inflict without a regret: I have not firmness to resist evil, nor hardness enough not to repent yielding to its dictates. I tried to comfort her; but she shook her head, and said—

"You surely do not know the crime with which I am charged, Caroline, or you could not attempt to console me."

I told her, as gently as I could, that I was fully aware of it; and I saw her shudder as I made the avowal.

"You do not then, believe me guilty?" asked she. "No, you do not, you cannot think so ill of me!"

I could not resist expressing my conviction of her perfect innocence; (who so well knows it as I do?) and, as she passionately pressed my hand, she burst into a paroxysm of tears, which seemed to relieve her. This little act of confidence and endearment produced such a revulsion in my feelings as to make me wish to throw myself at her feet, and confess the deep injury I had inflicted on her. Tears came to my eyes, and this emotion increased her confidence towards me.

"Lord Annandale," she continued, "has written to say that he can establish my guilt by proofs that admit of no doubt. What they are I know not; I only know—and the God who hears me can be witness of my solemn averment!—that a thought of guilt has never entered my mind." (And well do I believe it.)

"But, dear Augusta, if, by producing proofs which, however innocent you are,

can establish grounds for a divorce and restore you to liberty, enabling you to marry the person you love—"

"Then you are acquainted with my weakness," interrupted she, blushing a deep red; "that whole, sole, and involuntary crime of which I am guilty! Oh, Caroline! how little do you know me, if you imagine that, branded with guilt, though conscious of my innocence, I could bring shame and disgrace to the man I loved. Were I free to-morrow, no power could compel me to become the wife of the person to whom you allude: and if indeed you have any respect left for me, never again refer to the possibility of such a measure."

"But *he*, knowing your innocence, and being aware that it was his too conspicuous attentions which have involved you in this dilemma—he, surely, loving you, as I am fully persuaded he does, would vanquish your unreasonable scruples, and reason you into accepting the happiness that, as his wife, may, and will, I trust, still be yours."

"Never, never! Think you, Caroline, that I would so far justify the odious, the abominable charges of which I am accused, as to wed the object of them?"

I would have replied, but she entreated me with such earnestness never to touch on the painful, the humiliating subject again, that I ceased to urge her; convinced, from her whole tone and manner, that one of the hopes which had hitherto actuated me, and palliated, in my own estimation, the scheme I had pursued, (namely the hope of her marrying the Marquess of Nottingham) would now be frustrated: and this conviction brought a pang of remorse and regret to my heart, of which I had not thought it capable.

The truth is—but, alas! I have ascertained it too late—I have totally misjudged Augusta's character, and miscalculated the effect that my plan would produce on her. I judged her by the generality of women I have known; all of whom would have gladly escaped from the thraldom of marriage with a man unloved, to the happiness of a union with the object of their affection, even though that happiness was purchased at the price of an *esclandre*, such as now awaits Augusta. I have hitherto disbelieved in female virtue, imagining it to be a chimera, or, at best a principle that rarely, if ever, opposed an insuperable barrier to the temptation of love. But I now see my error, and I tremble at having been the means of destroying the peace of mind of this young and innocent being; now that I am aware she will not accept the panacea that I hoped would have given her repose. Would that I had never interfered in this business, or, that I had sooner acquired the knowledge of Augusta's character, which now begins to dawn on my mind; for, selfish as I confess myself to be, I do believe that I should never have thought of sacrificing her repose to attain the fulfilment of my own views.

I felt like a culprit before this injured creature, still nearly a child in years; and, when I beheld the expression of anguish imprinted on her beautiful face, and reflected how many years she may be condemned to drag on a life of sorrow, I shrank before the consequences of my fatal scheme, and could have wept over my victim.

Her father and mother now entered the room; and my heart sank within me as I witnessed the change effected on their appearance within a few hours. Long, long years seemed to be added to their age; and grief, which is always so affecting in the old, was stamped on their brow.

"I am innocent; indeed I am innocent, dear father and mother!" exclaimed Augusta, throwing herself into their arms.

"We know that you are, my child!" replied her father, pressing her fondly to his heart. "We never, for a moment, doubted you!" sobbed her weeping mother, clasping her fondly to her maternal bosom.

"Come, my precious Gusty," said Lord Vernon; "come to your home. Would to God that you had never left it! I cannot bear that you should stay an hour longer beneath the roof of one who could suspect your purity, or who could prove himself so unworthy of the treasure we confided to him."

"Yes, my father, I will go," replied Augusta; "but let me first see the dear child;" and she burst into a flood of tears; for, even at this moment she could forget her own grief, to pity the poor boy, who was again doomed to the neglect from which she had rescued him.

The child was brought; and when he saw her, he rushed to her arms, clasping her round the neck with all his strength, and covering her tear-stained cheeks with kisses. She anxiously recommended him to the nurse's care, promising to reward her if she fulfilled her duty towards him faithfully; and dismissed not the child and his weeping attendant without tears, that

attested her attachment to the poor boy, who could hardly be forced from her arms, to which he fondly clung.

Lady Vernon now instructed the *femme de chambre* to convey her lady's wardrobe to Grosvenor Square; and then said,

"You will come with us, Caroline, will you not? as this is no longer a fit residence for you."

I told her that I was immediately leaving town, as my aunt had sent for me.

"What, sent for you already?" asked Lady Vernon, her pale cheek suffused with the blush of wounded pride.

"Caroline was to have gone, even if—(here Augusta paused) for her aunt is ill."

The worthy old couple pressed my hand kindly, and hoped I should find my good aunt better.

"Come, my child, let us leave this house," said Lord Vernon,—"I cannot breathe freely in it."

The *femme de chambre* brought a cloak and bonnet for Lady Annandale, which I assisted her to put on, my hands trembling so violently that I could hardly perform this little service.

"Put on a black veil," whispered Augusta, her voice nearly choked by emotion; and then, embracing me tenderly, she left the room, supported by her father and mother. That embrace made me shudder! Was not mine the Judas-kiss? I followed her, with the vague purpose of imploring her pardon—of, perhaps, confessing how deeply I had injured her; but she had already reached the vestibule, in which all the servants were marshalled, and I shrank from exhibiting myself before them in my present state of agitation. I ran to the front drawing-room window, to catch one more glance of her: my heart melted with pity and remorse. She was on the steps, slowly descending with tottering pace, when the Comtesse Hohenlinden and Lady Castlemartin drove up to the door. They stared rudely at poor dear Augusta, without, however, bowing to her; (how I hated them both at the moment!) and when Lord Vernon's coach had disappeared, both ladies entered the house, demanding to see me.

"*Imaginez-vous, ma chère* Caroline, to what my friendship for you has exposed me!" said the *comtesse*, as she hurried into the room.

"Yes, indeed, it was quite dreadful!" interrupted Lady Castlemartin; "only fancy our having met that very shocking person, Lady Annandale; who was descending the steps when we drove up! She looked at us positively, as if she expected us to bow to her; but we, naturally, took not the least notice of her: and, would you believe it, she was rouged up to the eyes—I saw it even through her veil!"

"*Et ce pauvre cher* Lord Annandale!" resumed the *comtesse;* "he is, indeed, much to be pitied, to have been so abominably deceived by such an artful, designing prude."

"I dare say she will try to persuade Lord Nottingham to marry her as soon as she is divorced," drawled out Lady Castlemartin; "but she may be assured that, even if he should commit such a folly, she will never find herself again admitted to our circle. No; we must really establish a *cordon sanitaire*, to exclude all tainted persons from coming in contact with us."

What will you say, *ma chère amie*, when I tell you, that this same Lady Castlemartin is openly accused of a plurality of lovers? Yet this is the woman who would exclude the pure and high-minded Augusta from society, because she believes her to have had one! I felt so indignant with both of them, that I could with difficulty restrain the expression of my sentiments; though, to effect any good by revealing them, would, I well know, be a vain hope.

"Finding that you did not answer my note," resumed the Comtesse Hohenlinden, "I determined on coming here to seek you. I had inferred, from a billet I received last night from poor dear Lord Annandale, that that dreadful person would have left his house early this morning; but, not thinking it right to come here alone, I called on Lady Castlemartin to accompany and *chaperon* me."

"I hope no one will discover that we have been here," said Lady C. "Fancy how shocking it would be to get shown up in the Sunday papers; and be, perhaps, accused of visiting that dreadful person who has just left the house!"

"Pray, get on your things, *ma chère* Caroline," said the *comtesse;* "for the sooner we go the better. Your apartment is quite ready *chez moi;* so let us depart."

When I told the *comtesse* that I was immediately leaving town to proceed to my aunt's she could hardly credit me; and when she found I was determined to fulfil this resolution, in defiance of all her advice and entreaties, she seemed displeased.

"*Imaginez-vous, ma chère, à quoi vous vous exposez,*" said she, "remaining a single hour beneath the roof of a man who may now be considered in the light of a *garçon!*"

"I expect the carriage that is to convey me to the country every moment," I replied; "so you need be under no apprehensions for my reputation."

"In that case I will remain with you until you depart," resumed the *comtesse*, who, I believe, has latterly become jealous of me, from having observed Lord Annandale's attentions; and, as she announced this intention, down she sat.

I rang the bell to quicken my preparations; and, having addressed a few lines to Lord Annandale, to say that he might write to me at my aunt's, I left the house, attended by my *femme de chambre;* the *comtesse*, and her prudish *chaperon*, having waited to see me drive off before they took their departure.

I am now writing to you from the inn, *en route*, where I stop for the night. I anticipate, with no slight dread, a long and *triste séjour* at my aunt's; but a visit to her is, nevertheless, the most prudent measure I could adopt. I suppose it will be a year before the divorce can be obtained. What an age to look forward to spend in that castle of dulness, the *chateau de madame ma tante!—Plaignez moi, chère amie, et écrivez souvent à votre*

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

A FEW lines have just reached me, my beloved, from Lady Vernon, saying that Augusta is separated from her husband, and dangerously ill at their house. She adds, that Lord Annandale has impeached the honor of his wife, and intends seeking legal redress against Lord Nottingham. You see our worst fears, as to poor Augusta's unhappy marriage, are more than realised; but so confident do I feel of her integrity, that I am fully persuaded she is perfectly innocent of this vile charge. I wish to go to her, my dear Charles, for it is on occasions like the present that the countenance of a friend can be of use; and I am quite sure you will give me your sanction to proceed to London. How I lament that you are absent at this crisis! for your presence would be a solace to poor dear Lord and Lady Vernon, and a blessing, as it always is, to your own

MARY.

P. S.—I send this by an express, and hope to hear that your poor uncle is better.

THE EARL OF DELAWARD TO THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD.

How I regret my being absent from you at this moment, my own Mary! I entirely approve of your going to your unhappy friend; and agree with you in thinking, that it is when those who are dear are in affliction, that friends should prove that they are not mere pretenders to the name. Pray, take care of yourself, for my sake, dearest: nothing short of the present emergency could induce me to allow you to undertake this journey alone; so let me implore you to be careful of your health. My poor uncle is so much worse, that I fear all will soon be over.

Angels guard and bless my Mary, prays her fond husband,

DELAWARD.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

I ARRIVED here much less fatigued than could be expected, my beloved Charles; and found poor Augusta dangerously ill with a violent fever. She knows no one, raves incessantly, and the physicians entertain great doubts of her recovery, unless a speedy change occurs in the disease. Her unhappy father and mother are in a state of mind impossible to be described. My arrival affected them to tears; for they looked on it, and with reason, as a proof of my perfect conviction of her innocence.

"You do not, then, believe our child guilty?" said Lord Vernon.

"Never could I harbor such a belief for a moment," answered I; "for I have known her too long and too well."

"Bless you for that!" replied Lady Vernon, bursting into tears.

They say that, for the first two days after she left Annandale House, she appeared tranquil, but terribly depressed in spirits. At the expiration of that time, a packet of newspapers, one or two vile caricatures, and a coarse anonymous letter, were brought to her; after the perusal of which she was seized with violent fits of trembling, and an acute pain in the head, which the physician pronounced to be an attack of brain-fever, induced by severe mental anguish. I have just been sitting by the bedside of the sufferer, and her ravings have shocked me.

"Do not let Lord Nottingham learn that I loved him, I implore you!" she repeat-

edly utters. "It would be dreadful were he to know my affection; I never could see him again. Oh, why am I married? Mary Delaward said that, married women must not have male friends. Do not, in mercy, tell her that I love him! She never would look on me again, were she made acquainted with my guilt. Oh, Caroline, do not leave me alone with him, for I tremble lest he should look at me, and discover the passion that is consuming me! Do not tell me that he loves me; say, rather, that he hates me! Yet, no—repeat once, only once again, that he loves me, and then let me die! Who said that I was innocent? Oh, it was my father and mother: I remember it now. But they did not know that I loved Lord Nottingham; if they did, they would think me guilty, and hate me. Do not, do not reveal the dark secret to them; but let it be buried with me when I am hid in the grave! Burn all those horrible newspapers—all—all! suffer not one to escape. See! they are posted on every wall, every house—on the trees, ay, and on the clouds! and the whole world are reading them, and chattering, and jibbering, and screaming my name; and the trumpets are proclaiming it through the earth, and every finger is pointing at me! Oh, 'tis dreadful! Hide me—hide me—deep, deep in the earth; ay, even in the dark grave!"

It is thus, my beloved, that she has raved during the two hours that I have been sitting by her bedside; and so piteous are her accents, that they have pierced my very heart. My fears are verified. She loves Lord Nottingham; but this unhappy passion is the extent of her error, as all her ravings denote. The revolting statements in the papers, so cruelly sent to her, have overpowered her already excited mind. Poor dear Augusta, with all her youth, beauty and innocence!—bitterly has she atoned for her indiscreet, her fatal choice of a husband!

She has been more tranquil for the last three hours, and has now fallen into a calm sleep. God grant that she may be relieved!

To-morrow you shall hear again from your own

MARY.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

MY poor suffering friend has had a quiet night, and awoke in her senses; though so languid as to create serious apprehensions for her life. She asked who was in the room. I made signs to her maid to answer: she, however, had fallen asleep: so I was forced to address to her two or three words of reply, but in a low tone.

"Do I still dream?" she demanded; "surely I know that voice. Is that Mary Delaward?"

"Yes, dearest Augusta, it is your early, your fond friend."

She tried to take my hand, but had not strength to effect her purpose. She then motioned to me to withdraw the curtain, and, when I had complied with her wish, she looked at me with an expression of such deep anguish, that I felt nearly overpowered.

"*You*, Mary, have not believed me guilty, the lost creature, they would fain make me appear. No; the good and pure are slow to condemn."

"Do not speak now, dearest Augusta," said I; "and, if possible, do not think, until you have regained some portion of your strength."

She shook her head, and answered—

"That will never be. Oh, Mary! you know not what I have suffered: to have brought shame to the brows of my dear father and mother: to be returned to their honorable roof dishonored; to have hundreds—nay, thousands, believing me all that my very soul abhors, and my name coupled with crime! Yes, I feel it has broken my heart;" and she sank her head on the pillow, exhausted by her emotion.

"But all who know you, dearest Augusta, are convinced of your innocence; they never, for a single moment, doubted it."

"Bless them for that belief!" she replied; "it is the only drop of balm in the cup of sorrow I have nearly emptied. Yet, dear and true friend, this is no time for deception; you must not think me better than I am. Though free from actual guilt, or even from the thought of it, I have allowed" (and here her pale cheeks became suffused with the deepest red) "an unhallowed passion to usurp my heart, to dethrone my reason. Was not this a crime, and of deep dye?"

"We are weak and fallible, my dear Augusta; but the Almighty is merciful, and pardons the involuntary errors of his frail creatures, when they have stopped short of guilt, or by deep repentance atoned for it."

"Another sin, also, presses heavily on my soul. Regardless of your wise counsel, I closed my eyes to the good qualities of him I wedded; and viewing his weaknesses through the medium of prejudice, exaggerated every defect, instead of, by affectionate kindness, endeavoring to amend them. He was not harsh, or unkind; even my coldness he bore with patience; and who knows, if I had evinced a better feeling towards him, whether he might not have become a more worthy and rational being?

"Had I avoided the society of him for whom I felt this engrossing, this culpable sentiment, the moment I had discovered my weakness, I should not have given room to the disgraceful suspicions that have for ever sullied my fame. But, no—I courted danger; and, heedless of my reputation, and of the peace of mind of those to whom I was dear, I continued to receive his daily visits; and have now nothing to oppose to the charges which appearances furnished by my folly justify, except assertions of innocence, which those only who love me will credit. Think of the ignominy of a public trial! All the odious, the revolting disclosures of domestic privacy, thus laid open to the coarse and vicious, who are but too prone to believe the worst. To have one's name made a byword—a mockery—a shame! Oh, Mary! what woman could bear this degradation, and live?"

"But you, dearest, are innocent, and your innocence will be made manifest to the world."

"Could that innocence be questioned, Mary, if I had not encouraged habits of intimacy, which, now that I calmly look back and reflect on, were too decided and too conspicuous not to originate suspicions derogatory to my honor? What would, or what could be thought, when it becomes known that I, every day, spent whole hours in his society frequently quite alone? No acquittal, could I hope for one, could console me for the appearances of guilt which my own imprudence has created; and I feel that, in thus disregarding propriety, I have sinned against virtue, by furnishing cause for suspicion and evil example."

I tried, but in vain, to speak comfort to her; she is so impressed with a sense of the faultiness of her own conduct, to which alone she attributes all that has occurred, that it is impossible to console her. What a wife would this dear creature have made, had she fallen into good hands! When I think of her youth (she is not yet seventeen,) and see the delicacy and purity of her mind, the freedom from all rancorous passions—evinced by her entire abstinence from any condemnation of the husband who proved so unfit a guardian for the treasure confided to him—and the severity with which she judges her own conduct, I cannot repress the bitter feelings that arise in my breast.

The action is already commenced, and of this she was apprised by a statement in one of the papers so cruelly sent to her. I tremble for its effect on her in her present weak state. Lord and Lady Vernon are nearly stunned by the weight of this heavy blow; for their very existence seems bound up in their child.

Adieu, my beloved! Ever your own
MARY.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MY reception from my aunt was as disagreeable as I anticipated, *ma chère amie.* She suspects that there is some hidden motive for my return, and has assailed me with a thousand questions. When she learns the cause, she will be furious; for she always seems prepared to judge me as unfavorably as possible on every occasion, and loves Augusta so much, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to persuade her that *she* could do, nay, dream of, wrong.

I asked Augusta to write to me, but she has not yet complied with my request: I have a fearful presentiment that she is ill; and this apprehension haunts me so continually, that there are moments when I would give worlds that I had never interfered in her ill-assorted marriage, or plotted for its annulment. I have heard from Lord Annandale, who says he has put all *en train* for the action. I threw his letter from me with dislike and contempt; yet it is to wed this man that I have stooped to destroy the reputation, perhaps the peace of mind, of one of the most faultless of her sex! And yet, how far less unworthy is he than am I! for he is the dupe of my vile artifice, and knows not that his wronged wife is innocent. We are strange creatures; for I, who have the heart and head to plot against Augusta, have not the courage to contemplate the possible results of my scheme. Should she continue as wretched as when I saw her, or should she die—but I will not, dare not, anticipate so fearful a catastrophe—a catastrophe that

would preclude me from ever again knowing a moment's peace.

I am become strangely nervous of late; my sleep, too, is troubled by dreams, all of which have Augusta for their object. I see her ever, with that pale, but beautiful face, which reproaches me for having wronged her. A thousand recollections of her affection and confidence rise up to upbraid me; but, above all, the memory of the noble manner in which she received my assertion of innocence of the charge, but too well-founded, of my first and fatal error.

Now that the hope, which has hitherto cheered me, of eventually securing her happiness in a union with Lord Nottingham has disappeared, the consciousness of the atrocity of my guilty scheme weighs heavily on my mind. Would to heaven I had never entered on it! Too late do I feel that I did not comprehend this pure-minded woman: I believed her, like too many of those we have known, incapable of resisting the dangerous ordeal of love. But even this almost omnipotent passion she has partly vanquished: for the sentiment, in her, partook of the purity that characterises her so peculiarly; and, though she could not entirely extirpate it, yet it could not pervert her noble nature.

Yes, I now begin to be aware that virtue and passionate love may abide together in the female heart; and that those who, like me, have been doubtful of the existence of the union, only because they had been too stubbornly blind to observe it, may live to discover and deplore the pernicious fallacy of their system. I look back on the days of my early youth with horror, stained with one degrading crime, the consciousness of which has blighted every hope, and rendered torpid every virtue. All my thoughts addressed to the concealment, instead of being directed to the correction, of errors, how have I strayed from the path of truth and peace! Yes, I cannot disguise from myself that I am despicable; and, to you alone, who have been a witness, nay, a partaker, of the sins of my early youth, dare I draw aside the dark veil that shrouds them from others, and relieve my oppressed heart by the disclosure of its torments.

How could I live in intercourse with Augusta for months without discerning the delicacy and purity of her mind! Fool, fool that I was, to imagine that the power of bestowing her hand where I know her heart is placed, would console her for the loss of fame! Many—too many women would be so consoled, but she is not of them; and I am sensible, too late, that I have, by my wicked, my inhuman scheme, destroyed her peace of mind for ever.

A letter has just been given to me: its contents have almost made me expire with horror. Fancy my feelings, Delphine, when I tell you that the artful and vicious man who betrayed me in early youth, and who has avoided me ever since—he, who not content with triumphing over my virtue, exposed my infatuation and shame—is now in England! yes, even here, within a short distance—poor, degraded and desperate. All that Florestan had heard of his ruin, is but too true. He has spent the whole of his small fortune, and has exhausted all resources except the infamous one he now adopts of compelling me to marry him, under pain of disclosing all to my aunt, and to the world. He has ascertained that my aunt is rich, and that I am considered heiress to her wealth. This is his inducement to his present plan and I know too well of what he is capable to doubt his putting his threat into execution. What am I to do? where turn for support in this fearful dilemma? He says he will arrive at the post-town nearest this to-morrow; and that, if I do not meet him, he will directly seek my aunt, and inform her of all his rights over me.

Oh, Heavens! what is to become of me? who will, who can protect me from this unprincipled, ruthless being! How I shudder at the thoughts of beholding him, knowing how wholly I am in his power! I am overpowered by terror, and feel a faintness that compels me to leave this unfinished.

Delphine, I have seen this man, and loathe him as never mortal loathed another. Yes, I abhor him and despise myself—oh, how immeasurably!—that I could ever have liked such a wretch. The long years that have elapsed since I knew him, he has evidently passed in a career of vice and profligacy, that has rendered him as hideous and disgusting as he was once the reverse. His manners, too, have fallen with his fortunes; for they are low and brutal beyond any that I ever witnessed, and he appears to be reduced to the most extreme poverty. Such was his attire, that I trembled at being seen by any of the peasants in the vicinity conversing with him.

We met in a retired lane outside the park-wall—a place of rendezvous that he

indicated to me in a note, soon after his arrival, when he had reconnoitred the precincts of this abode. The person who brought this letter told the footman, that he believed it was a petition from a poor foreigner in distress. Luckily I was alone when it was given me; for had my aunt been present, her suspicious eyes would have detected my emotion. I stole to the appointed place like a culprit, and there I found him. Oh, Delphine, had you seen him!—his face bloated and flushed from the effects of intemperance; his figure attired in a suit of tawdry and threadbare clothes, yet still aiming at fashion; his whole air resembling Frederick le Maitre in *Robert Macaire*. A gilt chain was drawn conspicuously through the button-holes of a showy but soiled waistcoat; an old hat on one side of his tangled locks; and a cigar in his mouth: but to the expression of his countenance there was no doing justice. The mixture of cunning and reckless daring—oh it was fearful!

He addressed me in a tone of easy familiarity, calling me his *bonne amie*, his *chère* Caroline. "Time," said he "has dealt more leniently by you, Caroline, than by me; for play, infernal play! tries faces as well as purses; and both, *sacre Dieu!* have suffered with me. But you appear cold, reserved—not glad to see me. How is this? Come, come, *ma belle*, we must be better friends; for I am, as you know, a sort of husband, and, as such, entitled to certain privileges;" and the wretch positively attempted to embrace me. Oh, God! the degradation of that moment punished half the evil actions of my life.

"Stand back!" I exclaimed hoarsely, half choked by indignation.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he said, "*mademoiselle* seems disposed to act *la fière;*" and he burst into a contemptuous laugh: "it is a pity that she was not always so prudish. But let that pass: I am not come here to play the lover; such mummery was well enough when *mademoiselle* was younger, and better worth the trouble—but now it is different. The years that have elapsed since we parted, (for you, like myself are not in your *première jeunesse*, though, *en verité, tres bien conservée*) have mended *your* position, and injured *mine*. You are the heiress of a rich aunt; I am the heir of naught but what the gaming-table has left me, which consists of but a few shillings; for Fortune is even more fickle than your sex, and has played me more scurvy tricks than all womankind put together. England is not the place to live in without money; and, as I mean to live, money I must have: I have therefore determined to render a tardy justice to your honor by espousing you, and to act the affectionate nephew to your aunt, do the honors of her *triste château*, turn *chasseur*, *fermier*, *gentilhomme Anglais et bon père*, *peut-être*, *par dessus le marché*.

I listened to him, nearly overpowered by disgust and horror; for his words were accompanied by a coarseness of gesture, and reckless impudence of manner, that appertain only to the lowest and vilest of men. The word *crapulous* is the only one that can adequately describe his appearance.

"You have already exposed me," answered I; "for at Turin you basely betrayed my dishonor without even concealing my name."

"Bah, bah! what of that?" replied he; "who could help boasting of such a *bonne fortune?*"

To remonstrate with so utterly unworthy a person, I felt would be useless; consequently, I continued to listen to his proposals until he had concluded, wishing that the earth might open and ingulf him or hide me from his sight forever.

"What you propose," replied I, "is too absurd to merit a reply. I would prefer exposure, disgrace—ay, even death itself, to a marriage with you!" and I looked the contempt I felt.

"*Mademoiselle* is not complimentary; but the English are rarely polite, and her *séjour* in her native land has somewhat impaired the tone *de bonne compagnie* that used to distinguish her when she desired nothing so much as a union with her humble servant (bowing mockingly.) Your affection *mademoiselle*, it would be ungrateful to doubt, after the proofs of it with which you formerly honored me. I am still the same man on whom you bestowed your heart, and the very pretty person that enshrined it at Florence, some twelve years ago. The only difference is, that I am twelve years older, (and this misfortune you share with me in common) and that my wardrobe is less *recherché*, an inconvenience which is easily remedied. Some of your aunt's gold will soon metamorphise me into *un élégant;* and we shall I flatter myself make a very good looking couple, even though we are *un peu passés*.

"I warn you," said I, "that if you present yourself before my aunt, she will consign you to the police."

"She will do no such thing," answered he coolly; "for I have with me all the tender billets with which you favored me

in former days—billets which furnish such incontestable proofs of your *tendresse*, and the extent to which it led you, that I do not think an English prude would particularly like the infamy which the exposure of them would obtain for you. To preserve the reputation and the honor of the family unimpaired, your aunt will be disposed to grant me a *legal* right to the charms which her niece less ceremoniously yielded to me. The reason of my first seeking this interview with you was from a desire of sparing your feelings as much as possible. I want you to furnish me with a sufficient sum of money to enable me to come here in a manner becoming my birth, and your future husband. I shall, provided you do so, demand your hand without making *madame votre tante au fait* of our having anticipated her consent some twelve years ago. I will plead the force of a long attachment and you will, with *maidenly reserve*, acknowledge that your happiness depends on becoming my wife. She, like a good aunt, will yield to our wishes; you will be made an honest woman, and I a happy husband, *sans doute*. Refuse compliance with this proposal, and I swear, that I will see your aunt in my present guise, declare the position in which we stood to each other, and inform her of my intention of giving publicity to my right over you, unless she agrees to purchase my silence by the gift of half her fortune.

The craft, the audacity, and the villany of this hardened wretch, are, as you see, matchless. I am caught in his toils, and escape is, I fear, hopeless.

"You are perhaps, not aware," said I, "that my aunt's fortune, which is not by any means large, is not entailed upon me, and that she may leave it to whom she likes."

"Yes, yes, I know all that," replied he; "I have made my inquiries."

"My aunt is far from being a fond one, as you seem to imagine, and would neither yield assent to my marrying you, unless you possessed a suitable fortune, nor consent to buy your silence at the price you name."

"We shall see, we shall see," answered he; and he turned in the direction of the park, leaving me transfixed with horror.

I called him back, almost maddened with the contending emotions of fear, shame, and hatred. Oh, God! Delphine, what were then my feelings—what are they now! I asked him to grant me a few hours to reflect: and he yielded to my entreaty with the air of a man who makes a sacrifice.

"*En attendant, ma chère*," said he, "I want money."

I gave him the contents of my purse, consisting of a trifle only, at which he glanced contemptuously, observing, that it would scarcely furnish a copious repast, and bed, of which he stood greatly in need. While he was secreting the money, I saw the handle of a poniard glittering in his breast; and I absolutely shuddered as I remarked the assassin-like scowl of his brow, which indicated no reluctance to use this concealed weapon. He noticed my agitation, and smiled.

"What! you are alarmed at this?" said he, drawing forth the dagger. "I never go without it; it has stood my friend more than once in times of need: but do not be frightened, it wages no war with women"—and he replaced it—"though at one period, I flatter myself, and *you* seemed to be of my opinion, that I was a lady-killer: *mais tout celà est fini à présent; et la seule dame que j'aime actuellement est la dame Fortune, qui est, entre nous soit dit, la seule qui m'ait résisté.*"

To have returned to the house for all the money that my desk contains, leaving him to loiter about the lane, would have exposed me to the risk of observation; and to have sent the money to him by a servant, would have been nearly as dangerous. He has, therefore, proposed coming to-night, after all are in bed, when I am to give it to him from the window of the state dressing-room, which, fortunately, opens into the park.

What am I to do? Oh! I would give worlds to be near you at this moment; to have your advice, and the protection of your husband, to shield me from this miscreant. He is quite capable of fulfilling all his menaces; and my aunt is so rigid, that she never would forgive me were she to know what he threatens to relate. I can write no more; my head is confused, and my heart is faint. Why, why did my evil destiny throw me into the power of this wretch?

I felt so overpowered during the whole evening by the interview of the morning, and the anticipation of that of the night, that my aunt, who seldom shows much interest about me, asked, with unusual kindness, whether I was unwell, and suggested different remedies for my alleged complaints. Touched by her kindness, I

was almost on the point of throwing myself at her feet, and confessing the fatal error of my youth, and its consequences, when the newspapers were brought in. On what trifles does the happiness or misery of life sometimes hang! Half an hour later; and I could have had courage to reveal to her the fearful position in which I am placed. I would have implored her to send me away out of England—any where—to avoid this hated wretch; and she seemed so much more kindly disposed towards me, that she might have taken pity on my despair; but she had no sooner glanced over the papers, than her whole countenance changed, from its recent expression of kindness to one of scrutinising curiosity and stern severity.

"Now is the cause of your return explained," said she: "as, also, why you appear so pale and agitated.—Why did you not tell me that Lady Annandale was driven with ignominy from her husband's home? Yes, I see the cause; the very day you left London! You must have been privy to this disgraceful catastrophe! Who knows how far your evil influence and counsel may have led to it! for she was pure and guiltless as an angel when she left her father's roof. Caroline, if you have had aught to do in this affair, may God forgive you, but I never will. You, who are so many years her senior, who have had such a knowledge of society and its dangers—why was it that you did not prevent this catastrophe? Yes, it will break the heart of her excellent parents to have dishonor stamped on their child!" and here my aunt burst into tears. "And, now I remember," she resumed, looking at me with sternness, "how came it, that you yesterday received a letter franked by Lord Annandale? Are you so unfeeling, so faithless a friend, as to maintain a correspondence with the husband who drives Augusta from his house? for it is plain the letter could not be from her. Caroline, I have sometimes accused myself of judging you too harshly. Your irreligion, your levity, and want of womanly reserve gave me a very bad opinion of you; but I never thought you capable of deserting your friend the moment that she most required the consolation of your presence, or of keeping up a correspondonce with the husband who has denounced her."

I attempted to explain, that, as she went to her father's, I thought it best to come home.

"Then you judged her guilty of the crime with which she is charged!"

I tried to answer an assent; but I could not utter the falsehood.

"How was it possible for her to be culpable even in appearance (for that she is so in reality no person shall ever make me believe,") pursued my aunt, "without your having perceived some impropriety of manner?—And when you had perceived, why not have remonstrated and advised? If neither advice nor remonstrance availed, why not have left her house ere she herself was expelled from it? All this mystery must be explained, Caroline; and I warn you, that unless the explanation proves more satisfactory than I anticipate it will, you will find me a severe judge, and an implacable guardian. I loved Augusta Vernon from her birth, and would have preferred hearing that she was dead to having her name thus dishonored."

So saying, my aunt rose from her chair, and retired to her own room, leaving me overwhelmed with confusion and dread. I withdrew to my chamber, where I am now writing in a state of trepidation I have never before experienced. The great clock in the hall has tolled twelve. It seemed, to my excited feelings, to have a funeral sound; and I almost wished it was my knell, as even death would have been a relief to my present horrible position. The money I possess, not above twenty pounds, is wholly inadequate to procure even a temporary forbearance from my evil genius. The sale of all the trinkets I have would not produce a sum sufficient to satisfy his rapacity.—What, what will become of me? Hark! I hear the signal—he is at the window!

I descended to the state dressing-room, opened the casement in fear and trembling, and offered to hand him the money; but he thurst it aside: "what," said he, "do you treat me as a mendicant?—*me*, who hold your reputation, your position even in this dwelling in my hands? I must, and will enter the house—I have much to say to you."

"Say it where you are?" I exclaimed; "for into the house you cannot, must not come."

"We shall see," he replied, and vaulted into the window, pushing me from it and closing it down.

I shook so violently that I could with difficulty support myself—my terror of him suggesting a thousand fearful thoughts.

"Who would believe," said he, looking at me with an expression of mingled mockery and malice almost demoniacal, "that we too have been lovers; that we

have met in rapture, and parted with regret? Who would imagine that the woman I see cowering and trembling before me, with averted eye and blanched cheek, has smiled with delight, and blushed love's own rosy hue, when I have approached her? Such are the metamorphoses wrought by time and circumstances; and I—yes, even I—could be sad as I note them. But I am a philosopher, and only laugh at what occasions tears to others;" and he laughed in a sort that caused my blood to chill.

"Do not make a noise I implore you," said I; "for my aunt sleeps in the next room."

"And now to business," he rejoined, without noticing my appeal. I handed him the money, which he eyed contemptuously, but, nevertheless, put it into his pocket; and, doing so, I again saw the handle of his poniard peeping forth, and shuddered at the thoughts it excited.

"Is this all your wealth?" asked he.

I answered in the affirmative.

"Why, what a stingy old animal your aunt must be! I shall make her more liberal, you may be sure. It is devilish cold here, *ma belle!*" resumed he: "no wonder you tremble; for even I, who am used to be less delicately lodged, am half frozen."

As he thus spoke, he took from his pocket a leathern bottle, filled with some spirit, the odor of which was detestable, and emptied nearly half the contents of it into his mouth.

"I have discovered," he continued, "at at the village alehouse, where I lodge, that your statement is correct as to your aunt's fortune not being settled on you—nay, more, it is said that she does not appear to feel any strong predilection in your favor. There is no accounting for tastes, you know: every one may not admire you as much as your humble servant once did—nay, still does; for, *en verité*, you are still a monstrous fine woman."

How I loathed him!

"Now, as her fortune is wholly in her own power, she might take it into her head to bequeath it to some one less likely to do honor to it than we are; and to drag on some tedious years in pleasing a stupid old woman, who, after all, may cheat one at last, is a *triste* affair. I know something of this sort of existence, for I tried it once. An old uncle, rich as Crœsus, *bête comme un Anglais*, and capricious as a Parisian *belle*, took me to live with him as his adopted heir, at his old *château* near Turin. He kept an execrable cook, gave me bad wine and good advice, until I could stomach neither any longer; consequently, took French leave of him one night, disembarrassing him of all the money in his *coffre fort;* a good round sum, too, by Jove! But he, stupid old dolt, chose to resent this little *escapade* of mine as a heinous offence; and, when he shortly afterwards died, left his fortune to another nephew, who could swallow bad dinners and good advice without murmuring, and prefer waiting patiently for a large fortune to anticipating a portion of it."

While he recounted this anecdote of himself, he was glancing round at the various articles of plate and furniture in the room.

"Every thing here indicates wealth," said he: "that silver-framed mirror, this silver basin and ewer, and the *nécessaire*," taking one of the large old-fashioned boxes from the *toilette*, and weighing it in his hand. "Do you know that there is a little fortune in this apartment? Your aunt has, doubtless, diamonds of value?"

A vague dread that this question was only the prelude to some proposal of theft, induced me to answer in the negative.

"What! would you have me believe that the owner of the costly things before me has no diamonds? Bah! I know better; you are disingenuous, Caroline. Ye gods, how thirsty I am!" pursued he, having again recourse to his bottle; "it is the infernal bacon I partook of, by way of a supper, that has produced this insatiable thirst. *Apropos de souper*, how can you, *ma belle*, who have lived in civilised countries, exist on English cookery? Faugh! the recollection of it makes me sick! *Mais, revenons à nos affaires.* What do you intend? How are you to procure a sufficient supply of money to place me at my ease, and prevent the necessity of my exposing you to your aunt? I really have no malice against you, *ma chère;* and, if I am compelled to any hostile measure, poverty alone will be the cause."

I told him that, except a few trinkets, all of which were at his service, I had nothing that could produce money.

"Where are they? let me see them," replied he.

"They are in my bed-room, above stairs."

"Go for them: why do you hesitate?"

I dared not tell him what was then passing in my mind, but he divined it.

"You are afraid to leave me here with these costly things," said he, pointing to

the rich toilette service; "but I am ready to attend you to your bed-room, if you prefer this alternative;" and this was uttered with a glance that made me shudder.

I instantly took a light, and glided with stealthy steps along the corridor, and up the stairs, leaving him in the dressing-room below. It was several minutes before I could find the key of my jewel-case; and when I did, in my trepidation, I could not open it for as many more. At length, having placed the trinkets in a large silk reticule, I left my chamber, but I had only advanced a few paces when I heard a noise. I returned in terror to my room and locked the door, convinced that some one had detected the nocturnal visiter below. I listened in breathless terror; but, finding all continue quiet, I again stole down stairs, and found him where I had left him, but with a face nearly as pale as my own, and nearly equally embarrassed in manner.

"Did you hear a noise?" asked he, eagerly.

I answered in the affirmative.

"What could it be?" demanded he, eyeing me scrutinisingly.

Having ascertained that I was ignorant of the cause, he hastily added—

"I think I had better depart; there may be danger in remaining longer."

"But you have not seen the trinkets for which you sent me," said I.

"True, true," he replied; "where are they?"

I delivered to him the silk bag that contained them, which he snatched, saying—

"I will examine them another time, but now I am in a hurry. Adieu, Caroline!"

"What are your plans?" I asked, in fear and trembling. "Do not, I entreat you, send any more notes here from the alehouse: a repetition of such a course must excite suspicion; and my aunt is already but too much disposed to think harshly of me."

"She will think harshly of you no more," said he, and a change was visible in his countenance; "for I will never betray you to her."

"Promise me this!" I eagerly exclaimed.

"I promise you," he answered; and there was a wildness and strangeness in his countenance that I had never before seen it wear.

"I must go," resumed he, hurriedly; and he opened the casement and disappeared.

An oppressive weight seemed removed from my breast when I again found myself alone. I examined all the room; for, to say the truth, I suspected that the visible change and trepidation of his manner arose from his having purloined some of the articles of massive silver which he seemed to examine with such longing eyes. I was the more inclined to this suspicion from having heard a noise, resembling that produced by the closing of a window, when returning to the chamber, which led me to infer that he had placed something on the outside of it.

All remained, however, as I had left it; and it was a relief to me to find that he was not quite so base as I had suspected him to be. Having carefully fastened the shutters of the window, I stole back to my room; where, feeling too much agitated to hope for sleep, I have employed the rest of the night in detailing to you my nocturnal interview with this fearful man. What have I not still to dread from him! for I put no faith in his promises. The moment he has expended the scanty sum I have given him, and the amount of what the trinkets may produce, he will return here to denounce me to my aunt, from whose severity I can hope for no mercy.

It is strange what could have so changed his whole appearance and manner, while I was absent from the chamber. It could not have been above half-an-hour altogether. I left him half-intoxicated and reckless, impatient for the trinkets I offered him; and I found him pale as death, perfectly sobered, nearly as nervous as myself, and seeming to have quite forgotten the trinkets he had been so anxious to obtain! Could it be that any supernatural appearance produced this visible change? I feel a dread steal over me even at the supposition. Merciful Providence, if such things are possible! But let me conquer these painful creations of a distempered fancy.

Perhaps it was remorse for the infamous conduct he was pursuing towards me that struck some chord in his heart, and led to the change I observed. If so, and it operate to procure me a cessation of his visits and letters, I shall forgive him all the misery he has caused me within the last few hours—and bitter has it been. Oh! Delphine, could you but see him as he is now—ruined, degraded, and steeped in vice of the lowest, the most disgusting

kind; bearing in his flushed and swollen countenance the impress of habitual intoxication and brutal passions—how would you pity me at being condemned to associate with such a being even for a minute, and be treated by him on terms of perfect equality! When I saw myself in the power of this man, alone, and in the dead of night, a sickening sense of terror crept through my veins. Robbery, even murder, seemed possible, as I looked at his scowling and ferocious brow; but, dreadful as was this apprehension, it was feeble to that of his attempting any personal familiarity, to which death, in its most terrific shape, would have been preferable.

Oh! it is only when vice is thus unveiled before us in all its hideous deformity that we are struck with terror at the monster. We saw this man when youth and fashion rendered him more attractive than most of those who are now basking in the sunshine of favor with the giddy and unthinking of our sex. The germs of all the vices that have since ripened in his heart then existed; but they were concealed beneath the varnish of personal refinement. The uncontrolled indulgence of his passions, and an utter selfishness, that rendered him regardless of their consequences to others, have brought this once gay and brilliant being to the lowest degradation; and those who could smile at the vices of the fashionable sensualist turn with horror from the crude, undisguised, and unmitigated ruffian.

But is it for me to moralise on the crimes of others?—I, who have plotted to destroy the virtue of the purest of her sex; and, finding it immaculate, descended to the basest arts to compromise her reputation! Augusta, you are avenged! for, though bowed down by sorrow, your innocent breast will never know a pang to be compared with the fierce ones inflicted by remorse.

Could I but once find myself freed from a life of dependence on my aunt, and in possession of a home and station in society, the rest of my life should be passed in the exercise of those virtues, the existence of which I have hitherto disbelieved, and the practice of which I have ever neglected. My views, opinions, feelings—all are changed. The veil that has heretofore obscured my vision, has fallen for ever; and I loathe the vices, however sanctioned by social convention, which I used to regard with such indulgence—nay, which I have so deeply shared.

Fatigue oppresses me, and the light of day has dimmed that of my expiring candle. Adieu!

Pity me, Delphine! I am distracted—yet not sufficiently so to lose, for a moment, the sense of my misery. My aunt, my noble-minded aunt, was found dead in her bed this morning—murdered!—her jewels stolen—her escritoire rifled! Can you not divine by whom? And *I*—*I* am the depository of this terrible, this fatal secret! *I* it was, who let the assassin enter! I it was who told him where she slept! I it was who, by my absence, gave him the opportunity of committing this fearful deed; and I it was who secured the shutters of the window by which he retreated, thus fixing on some innocent person the suspicion of a guilt, the perpetrator of which I alone know! Oh, God! oh, God! I shall go mad!

I was awakened from a feverish slumber by repeated knocks at my door. Having started from my bed to open it, my maid stood before me in breathless horror.

"Your aunt is dead—murdered, mademoiselle!" uttered she: "oh, mercy! what will become of us all?"

An instant conviction of who the murderer was, shot, like lightning, through my brain; and I fell fainting from the chair into which I had dropped a moment before. I must have continued insensible for a considerable time; for, on returning to a consciousness of my state, I found that I had been bled, and the family physician was exhorting those around me to be quiet.

"Is she, indeed, quite dead?" demanded I; "and have all means been tried to restore her?"

The doctor shook his head, and entreated me to be composed; but I was not to be silenced. Finding me obstinate, he told me that, on going to her room at the usual hour, her attendant found her mistress' room in great confusion: the drawers forced open and rifled of their valuable contents; her escritoire broken, and a large sum of money which it had contained gone; and my poor, poor aunt a lifeless corse, having been suffocated by means of a pillow, which was bound tightly around her face.

Her dying struggles then, Delphine, were the noise I heard: and even then, had I descended, it might not have been too late to save her. But, selfish as I was, I thought only of the danger which threatened myself by a discovery of that monster in the house, and left my poor

helpless aunt to be his victim. Now are the change in his looks and manner, his carelessness of my trinkets, and his impatience to depart, all explained: now do I too well comprehend the words he uttered —"She will think harshly of you no more;" "I will never betray you to her." Oh, Almighty Powers! thus was I parleying with the assassin of my poor aunt, who was, perhaps, at that moment rendering her last sigh!

Am I not as culpable as the wretch whose murderous hands committed the foul deed? Without my aid, he never could have gained access to the house, which is so strongly secured as to defy danger. Surrounded by attached and faithful servants, she slumbered in safety until I gave entrance to her murderer, and, as it were, wilfully guided him to her chamber. I see her ever before me, struggling and writhing beneath his grasp; I hear her dying cry ever ringing in my ears; and the ruthless monster stands ever confronting me with that malignant and fearful scowl which his countenance wore last night.

I sometimes think I am growing mad, and tremble with new dread, lest I should unconsciously utter something that may betray the fatal secret: at other moments I am strongly tempted to denounce the assassin; but how do so without betraying the mode in which he gained ingress to the house, and who it was that secured the window after his retreat? No, I have not courage to meet the punishment I so fully merit: and this fell secret must remain for ever buried in my breast.

The house is filled with magistrates and police. Several of the servants are arrested on suspicion: is not this too dreadful? And *I*, who, with, a word, could exculpate the innocent, must not, dare not, utter that word!

Yes! the pangs I now endure must surely be a foretaste of that future punishment awarded to the guilty; and conscience whispers that I merit it all. Would I were in my grave! yet, if beyond the grave—as all I now feel too surely proves —the sense of our crimes, and their heavy penalty, await us, what hope have I of the oblivion I would seek?

Such is the weakness to which my frame is reduced that I can scarcely move: violent pains in my head, and an aching of all my limbs, announce some serious malady. I will despatch this while I have yet strength to close it; perhaps it is the last you will receive from the wretched

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

How does it pain me, my beloved, not to be able to give you better tidings of my poor friend, knowing, as I do, the warm interest you feel in her; and knowing, also, how much you have need of consolation at present, with a dear relative in a state that admits not of the hope of his valuable life being prolonged many days. Alas! poor Augusta's condition is nearly as hopeless; her languor every hour increasing, and her form wasted nearly to that of a shadow. No complaint, no murmur escapes her dear lips; there is something more approaching to the idea we form of angelic natures in this lovely creature, than I ever before witnessed. Her beauty is positively radiant, but it is unlike the beauty of earth. Passion has left no trace on her polished brow; and patience and meekness are depicted on every lineament of her lovely face. In gazing on her angelic calmness, it seems cruel to wish her life prolonged; because it is impossible not to see, that this serenity is owing to her conviction that her recovery is hopeless.

When I have endeavored to lead her mind to the prospect of recovery, she has answered me,—

"Do not wish it, dearest friend: with a stained name, how could I ever again know peace? My Heavenly Father, who alone is fully aware of the extent of my weakness, while pardoning that will judge me more leniently than men; and in the grave I shall not meet the eye of scorn, nor have to shrink from the contempt of those who are too willing to believe all that malice can invent, or scandal propagate. The woman who has lost her honor should live to atone for her crime; but for her who has lost her reputation, there is no refuge but death."

When I think of this creature, now a breathing shadow before me, as she was a few brief months ago in the flower of youth and health, I turn with loathing from the corruption of the heartless and artificial society, among whose rocks and shallows her peace has been wrecked. The only desire she manifests is to leave London, though her physicians think that she has not sufficient strength to bear t e journey, however slowly performed; but the evinces such anxiety to undertake it, that her unhappy father and mother intend to suffer her to make the effort. A *dormeuse*, with additional springs, is preparing for her; and I trust that she will thus be able to reach the home of her childhood.

A strong sense of religion appears to have arisen in the mind of my poor dear Augusta, and its tranquillising effects are visible in all she says or does. It seems as though she considers the trials that have overtaken her as an atonement for her errors, and, as such, she shrinks not from enduring them; displaying a patience and resignation as touching as it is edifying.

Intelligence has just reached us of the death of poor Mrs. Wickenham, under the most harrowing circumstances; but as, doubtless, the papers will have apprised you of the dreadful event, I shall add no more. Lord and Lady Vernon are greatly afflicted by the appalling occurrence; but we carefully conceal it from poor Augusta.

That ill-directed, and, I fear, wicked person, Miss Montressor, will now be left free from all restraint, and will be likely to make an improper use of her lately acquired liberty. Strong as is my antipathy towards her, I cannot help pitying her present forlorn and unprotected state; and I hope her aunt has, at least, secured her a provision.

I shall accompany Augusta to the country, and think it likely we may set out in a couple of days. We shall make very short stages. How I long to see you again, my beloved! and to assure you, once more, *vivâ voce*, how entirely and fondly I am your own

MARY.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

SINCE I last wrote to you, *chère* Delphine, I have approached the gates of death. Would that I had entered them, instead of waking to life, with all the consciousness of intolerable and interminable misery. A violent fever assailed me soon after I despatched my last letter to you; and, during three weeks, I have been insensible to all around me. The most terrific visions haunted my excited imagination during that epoch. My murdered aunt seemed continually to stand before me, with her face swollen and distorted by the assassin's grasp. The grisly ruffian, himself, too, was ever present; either dragging me to the altar, where grinning fiends officiated, or on the point of hurling me from some stupendous rock into the angry abyss of waters that yawned to drown me. Augusta—the wronged, the innocent Augusta—robed in white, interposed to save me; but the grim murderer, with a demoniac laugh, plunged a dagger in her heart.

Such were the dreadful phantoms that, during three long and dreary weeks, haunted my disordered mind, with a vividness so terrific, that even now I shudder at the bare recollection, and fear to sleep, lest they should return to appal me.

The steward of my aunt has been arrested, and thrown into prison, on suspicion of the murder. He, it seems, had paid into her hands a large sum of money the day before this fatal event, the whole of which had disappeared, with her diamonds; and, as her possession of this sum was known only to himself, and that he slept in the house the night of the murder, he is, consequently, suspected, and viewed with abhorrence by all the neighborhood. *He* is to stand his trial; and *I*—*I*, who alone could prove his innocence, must not dare to justify him. Is not this compulsory acquiescence, which may terminate in another murder, too, too dreadful? and where will end the painful consequences of my crimes?

The clergyman of the parish has been repeatedly to see me; for my despair and illness have led those around me to attribute to grief the sufferings which are produced by horror and remorse. Consequently, I have met with a sympathy and kindness which I do not merit; and which those who evince it would shrink with dismay from bestowing, did they but dream of the horrific truth.

It appears, that, on that fatal and never to be forgotten night, my poor aunt, impressed with a but too just presentiment of my falseness to Augusta, whom she so tenderly loved, added a codicil to her will, by which she revoked the bequest of her fortune to me; and left me only two thousand pounds, vested in the funds, to be laid out in the purchase of an annuity for me. Even this circumstance has increased the sympathy and kindness of her friends and neighbors for me—so that I find myself well treated by all. How little do I deserve it!

I have found two or three letters from Lord Annandale, that arrived here during my illness. He tells me that the action is advancing; though the pretended illness of Lady Annandale was put forward by some of her friends as a motive for retarding it. Good heavens! if she should be really ill! If I have this calamity, also, to answer for! It is—it must be so; were she not ill, she surely would have written to me,

unknowing, as she still must be, of the odious, the wicked part I have taken in wounding her peace, and destroying her reputation. My mind is in a fearful state: I dare not anticipate the future—and I shudder at the past.

Here I cannot long remain; for a relative of my aunt, to whom she has bequeathed this place, will soon arrive to take possession of it, when I, of course, must depart. Had I inherited my aunt's fortune, I do believe that I should still have had the grace to have rendered justice to Augusta, by declaring to Lord Annandale the base and treacherous part I have acted towards her, and thus have stopped all legal proceedings against her; for I could then have retired to France or Italy, to live in affluence and liberty, without depending, as I now must, on a marriage with Lord Annandale, which is my sole and last resource for securing that wealth and station, for the possession of which I have bartered my hopes of peace here, and pardon hereafter. Had I been born with the riches and rank for which, from my earliest youth, I have pined, I might have passed through life unstained by crime; for I am not worse disposed than the generality of my fellow-mortals: but the want of these, and the ungovernable desire to possess them, have plunged me in guilt too deep ever now to be expiated.

I sometimes endeavor to consider my recent transgressions as the result of the first crime which I perpetrated; and thus heap on the head of the vile wretch who incited me to it, the entire responsibleness of my subsequent career. But I cannot wholly cheat myself with this sophistry; for conscience whispers but too distinctly, that it was not *he* who urged me to counsel a young and inexperienced girl, while yet a mere child, to contract a marriage, when she had discovered that she was even more than indifferent to him who sought her hand; or to plot, alas! too successfully, against her happiness and honor, when she, unsuspicious of my treachery, was prodigally lavishing on me all the affectionate kindness of her gentle and noble nature!

How dreadful, how appalling it is, to be fully conscious of one's crimes! to tremble at their consequences, and to loathe one's baseness, yet be compelled, by force of circumstances, to persevere in the career of guilt!

Would that I could delude myself into a blindness of my own wickedness; or that the remorse which consumes me could atone for past, and preserve me from future crimes. I sometimes think I am mad, and almost wish I were; for any physical suffering or debasement would be preferable to the fearful state of mind in which I exist.

Lord Annandale's letters inflict a bitter pang. When he praises the delicacy of my conduct towards my guilty friend, as he unjustly styles poor Augusta, contrasting it with that of the Comtesse Hohenlinden's, and the other ladies of her *coterie*, which has disgusted him, think what I must—what I *do* feel! Were he to know the truth, how would he loathe and spurn me! for he is only weak, and not malignant, and fully believes the culpability of his wife, or never would he have denounced her. Should he not live to discover her innocence in this world, there is another, where all secrets stand revealed; and *there* she will appear pure as angels, while I—oh, God! I dare not contemplate this dreadful retribution.

My head is so confused, that I know not whether I told you that, at the inquest after the tragical death of my aunt, the person keeping the alehouse, where that monster took up his abode, came forward and stated, that for two days before the murder, a foreigner, of most suspicious appearance, had lodged at his house. That, on the day of his arrival, he had sent me a letter, which they supposed to be a petition; and that, during the day, he had loitered in the immediate vicinity of the park. That, on the night of the murder, however, he had not left the house, having retired to bed early, and only departed at seven o'clock the next morning.

How well do I recollect his telling me that, fearing to excite suspicion, he had fastened his door on the inside, and quitted the chamber by the window! It is harrowing to my feelings to hear my *femme de chambre* recount the belief entertained by the whole household and neighborhood, of the guilt of poor Davenant, the steward; an old and faithful servant, who stood peculiarly high in the esteem of his mistress. What adds to the appearances against him is, that on him was found a pocket-book, known to be purchased by my unhappy aunt but a few days before, and containing a hundred pound bank-note, with a pearl hoop-ring, recognised to be hers, and known by her attendant to have been in her possession the morning previous to her death.

He declares that these articles were given to him by my aunt. His daughter

being on the point of marriage, his mistress presented him with a hundred pounds to add to her nuptial portion, and a ring for the intended bride.

All this he has protested, and all this I too well know to be true; for my aunt named the gifts to me, with many commendations on his zeal and integrity in her service, when we were at coffee, the last evening of her life. But if I state this fact, may not suspicion fall on some one equally innocent? I know not which way to turn, nor what to resolve; but I sicken with horror at thinking that a second life may be the victim to the fatal position in which I find myself. Another circumstance that tells against this poor man is, that a considerable increase to the bequest already made him in my aunt's will was added in the codicil that terrible night! His unfortunate family are overwhelmed with despair; they alone believe him innocent; but those who have known and esteemed him for years, have already pronounced him guilty, and execrated his ingratitude and villany.

How awful, how inscrutable, are the ways of Providence! While this innocent man is in a prison, awaiting, perhaps, an ignominious death, the real criminal is wandering at liberty with his ill-acquired wealth! Does not all this seeming anomaly *prove* a future state of reward and punishment? Too surely it does; and dreadful will be the condition of those in *that* life, who escape their punishment in *this!*

Would that I had the certainty that the assassin was out of England; for, much as I loathe him, and desire that his atrocious crime should meet a condign retribution, I tremble at the idea of his being arrested in this country as I am convinced that he would not hesitate to compromise my honor, if not my safety, by denouncing me in some way or other. Think of the horror, the degradation, of knowing that one's safety depends on such a wretch! Oh! it is too, too dreadful!

How different has been your fate to mine, Delphine! yet both equally sinned in our early youth. The consequences of that one false step, which has plunged me in the fearful position in which I now stand, have been comparatively harmless to you, because the partner of your indiscretion was not, as in my case, a villain. Yet had Villeroi been my lover instead of yours, my poverty would have imposed an impassable barrier between us. He would have left me as the other did, to brave all the consequences of my crime; but he would not have added insult to injury. Your wealth, your station, would always have rendered your lover anxious to become your husband; and thus, that sin which has led to my ruin, has had no evil influence on your brilliant destiny.

Forgive me for thus comparing our different fates; like a drowning wretch, who catches at straws, I try to cheat myself into a belief that I am not quite so guilty as conscience tells me I am; but even this illusion is denied me; for too plainly does reason whisper, that to my own turpitude alone do I owe the pangs I endure, and the future I tremble to contemplate.

Adieu, Delphine! Pity your unfortunate friend,

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

You will, my beloved, I know, be desirous to learn how poor dear Augusta bore her first day's journey, and be delighted to hear that she has supported it wonderfully well. Her longing anxiety to get away from London, lent her, I do think, a factitious force, that has given birth to new hopes in the hearts of her father and mother; hopes which a sad presentiment assures me will never be realised. She begged so earnestly that we might leave London very early in the morning, that, to comply with her wishes, we were in the carriage by seven o'clock. Only a very few persons, and these of the humblest class, were visible in Grosvenor Square, as she was placed in the *dormeuse*, propped up by pillows; but even from the glance of these she shrank with a dread that it was painful to behold.

I alone accompanied her in the *dormeuse;* Lord and Lady Vernon preceding us in their travelling-carriage, and Augusta's *femme de chambre* and mine following us in a post-chaise. She was silent, and absorbed in meditation. While we passed through the street, and immediate environs of London, she kept her eyes closed, as if to shut out their view, though the blinds had been let down at her desire, as she betrays the most nervous susceptibility at encountering the gaze of a stranger. When we had traversed the environs, she opened her eyes, and said—

"Now I can breathe more freely. I seem to have escaped from an atmosphere of humiliation and disgrace, where every eye mocked, and every tongue defamed

me. Oh, Mary! you know not, and *you* never can know, the agonising consciousness of being the subject of general and disgraceful animadversion; of seeing caricatures portraying vice in its most hideous forms, stamped with your likeness; *bon mots* and equivoques the most contemptuous coupled with your outraged name; while the good deplore, and the wicked triumph, in your presumed criminality. All this *I* have felt and writhed under, until my tortured imagination has conjured the belief that the overwhelming sense of shame which was preying on my soul, had fixed its burning brand on my brow. How —how I longed to be transported to some distant region, where my name had never been heard—my disgrace never been related; where I could again meet the glance of human beings without being crimsoned by the blush of shame. I was proud, Mary, too proud;—how has that pride been humbled! Will not every modest woman accuse me of bringing dishonor on my sex? Will not every immodest one cite me as a companion in vice? Think of a trial!"

"But your innocence will be proved, dearest."

"Admitting this to be the result; through what a fearful ordeal does the virtue of a woman pass—that virtue which should never be questioned—when it is subjected to the odious, the defiling publicity of a judicial investigation! No! the burning ploughshare, over which the female suspected of want of chastity was condemned to walk barefooted, as a mean of detecting the justice of the imputation, was a merciful penalty compared to that of the searing-iron of consuming shame which the notoriety of a *trial* inflicts on a sensitive mind. Then, to watch the struggles, to conceal grief and wounded honor, of those who were once proud of you: to know that their love and pity for one deemed impure, expose their own reputation to censure—oh! all this once felt, never can be erased from the memory, and poisons every thought, destroys every earthly hope! From such misery there is but one refuge —the grave; but one hope—the mercy of that God, who can distinguish between error and guilt, and can pardon her whom men condemn."

It is in vain, my dearest husband, that I endeavor to lead her to take a less sombre view of her position. Her womanly pride, and, above all, the extreme modesty peculiar to her character, have received wounds too deep, too deadly, ever to be healed; and however her innocence may be proved, hers is not a nature to drag on a protracted life of fancied humiliation, or to submit to the capricious kindness of some, and the still cherished malignant doubts of others.

Could the young and fair of her own sex, who, unthinking of crime, recklessly expose themselves to its suspicion, behold this lovely and unhappy creature sinking into a premature grave as a refuge from shame, how would they tremble at even the approach of levity, or the semblance of impropriety of manner; and how carefully would they preserve that decorum which should ever be the outward and visible sign of the purity within!

The love of Augusta for her father and mother, demonstrated in a thousand ways, is the most touching sight I ever beheld. It seems as if the cords that unite their hearts are drawn more tightly now that they are so soon to be rent asunder for ever. But even this tender affection makes her more alive to the sense of the wound inflicted on their peace—by the stain affixed to her honor. Yes; it is one of the peculiarities of the heart of woman, that the blow which most afflicts her, is that which must wound the hearts of those dear to her.

In compliance with the wishes of Augusta, we have chosen a different route to the direct one to Vernon Hall; consequently, we are unknown at the inns where we stop; and this privacy is a great relief to her feelings.

"What a blessing to die at home!" she often murmurs; "with no prating London physicians to describe to their fashionable and idle valetudinarian all the symptoms of—a broken heart; no hireling domestics of a season to profane one's name at the adjacent alehouses; no newspapers to detail daily 'the little better,' and 'something worse,' of poor Lady A.; and no strange pastor to speak comfort to dying ears, or patience to agonised ones. No, blessed be God! I return to the peaceful home of my infancy, where no eye will glance suspicion, no tongue utter, no heart form it. Good Dr. Henderson will not make my malady the topic of his visits, to his other patients. The gray-headed domestics, who have known me since my birth, will not talk lightly of me. Our provincial paper will not give the *on dits* of my health; and dear, good Dr. Wilmington, will smooth my passage to the grave, and best comfort those who are left to mourn for me."

She loves to dwell on her approaching end, to which she continually refers, as persons do to a long and pleasurable jour-

ney which they are about to undertake. Nor does she neglect to prepare for it, by prayer, meditation, and the cultivation of a contrite spirit. I never saw a creature throw off the faults of human nature so wholly, or clothe her spirit in meekness and holiness, as she does hers. Once, and only once, since the first day of her return to reason, I have ventured to name Lord Nottingham. She became crimsoned with shame; and, after a moment's pause, begged me to mention him no more. Then, resuming, after an internal struggle, "yet, why should I conceal from you, Mary, now, that by a consciousness of my sin, and a deep penitence, which I trust in the Almighty has atoned for it, that I felt for him a guilty passion, which rendered me blind and heedless to the danger to which I was exposing my fame, by permitting his daily visits. I was mad, infatuated—but dearly have I expiated that one sin. I trust that *he* never suspected my weakness; but, if he did, he never presumed. Nor did he insult me with a declaration of love; yet, a secret sympathy seemed to exist between us, that convinced me I was dear to him.

"If I did not feel that my days are numbered, I would not wound your chaste ear, Mary, with this avowal of an unhallowed passion; but; it is right I should humiliate myself by confessing it, now that it is only remembered with contrition. Think of the degradation to which this sinful love exposed me, when I tell you that a person—ay, and a woman, too—attempted to console me for the shame, the ignominy to which I was reduced, by holding out to me the prospect of being divorced! Yes, Mary, divorced! and then—I blush while repeating it—I might marry, as she said, the object of my affection. Was not this degradation! Yet, to this did I bring myself by my own infatuation."

Such are the reflections of this dear and suffering creature; which prove that she was formed, not only to live in purity, but to live unsuspected. I write to you while she is slumbering; but even her dreams are haunted by the thoughts that occupy her when awake; for, I have heard her low, sweet voice, continually repeat, "Indeed, I am not guilty! O, do not believe it!"

Much as I languish to have you with me, my beloved, yet I am not so selfish as to repine, knowing how your time is occupied; nor could I wish one hour of that life abridged, the continuance of whose frail tenure keeps you from your own

MARY.

THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO HENRY MORDAUNT, ESQ.

MY DEAR MORDAUNT:—All that the most gloomy imagination could have feared, has occurred—Annandale has commenced legal proceedings against me; and my infatuated passion and imprudent attentions have plunged the pure lovely object of them into a position the most humiliating to a noble nature like hers. Annandale must be the dupe of some plot, of which his innocent wife is the victim; for, I cannot think him so vile as to take the step he has done, without a belief in her culpability; and how could this belief have ever been formed, except by some wilful misrepresentations made to him, and some dark scheme put in practice to give a color to the charge. My suspicions all point to Miss Montressor; yet, what could be the inducement to conduct at once so wicked and so apparently causeless? I can discover no clue to this labyrinth of crime; but I loathe and execrate myself, for having furnished the occasion for its wearing, even for a moment, the semblance of probability, which it never could have done, but for my attentions.

Lady Annandale is ill—confined to her bed. All this I learn through the newspapers, for I dare not, under present circumstances, send to inquire at her father's door. Consequently, I, who could not bear to think of being a single day without seeing her, and who, for the accomplishment of this selfish enjoyment, have compromised her reputation, am now debarred the privilege of even a common acquaintance—that of sending to inquire after her health; and dare not even hope ever to behold her again.

Her innocence of this foul charge must be made manifest: nothing but the most wilful perjury can be brought against her. However, whether acquitted or condemned, too well do I know her, to indulge a hope that she would ever again consent to see me, and thus give a color to the odious suspicions my attentions have excited.

Lady Delaward has come to London, to be near her. I was sure she would; for, she is not a woman to doubt the purity of which her own feelings must be the guarantee; or to shrink from the responsibility of countenancing the innocence she does not doubt. She is worthy to be the friend of Augusta. But let me not use that name with a familiarity that I dare not adopt were she present; for, notwithstanding her

youth and inexperience, never yet did a woman preserve a more dignified reserve than Lady Annandale—a reserve that emanated from the inherent modesty of her nature.

I wander about at night like a disturbed spirit, and find myself continually in Grosvenor Square, gazing on the house that contains this suffering angel. The whole of the side where Lord Vernon's house stands is covered with straw; the knocker is tied up; and the entire mansion has an air of gloom and desolation which chills my heart. It was in that house, which now presents so dull and cheerless an aspect, that a few weeks ago, I saw this lovely creature, in all the bloom of health and youth. How looks she now? Bowed down by shame and sorrow; for, well do I know, that even the consciousness of her innocence will not enable her to support the false, the insulting suspicions, to which her honor is exposed; and by me!—me, who should have shielded it from even the shadow of a doubt. I have been her bitterest, cruellest enemy; and she must loathe me, when she reflects on the irreparable injury I have inflicted on her.

I never go out during the day, or receive any visits. I could not bear, in such a crisis, to meet the eye of curiosity, or to have my looks or manner commented upon, and cited as presumptive proofs of the truth or falsehood of the vile charge against that honor I know to be so spotless. To affect a cheerfulness utterly repugnant to my feelings, would be impossible; and the gloomy despondency I cannot shake off, would be considered as evidence of guilt. O world! world! how often are your conclusions erroneous! and how prone are you to attribute the vilest motives to actions, where guilt never was imagined!

I destroy all the newspapers that refer to this foul libel; and writhe in agony when I reflect how many thousands of them will circulate in the various parts of the globe, disseminating far and wide these infamous aspersions on the fame of this angel: and I—*I* am the cause of all this! Better could I have borne that she had died while yet her reputation was as stainless as is her life, than live to see her name profaned, and made the subject of the ribald jests of the vile and vicious.

Bear with me, my dear Mordaunt; and believe me ever yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

THE COUNTESS OF DELAWARD TO THE EARL OF DELAWARD.

WE reached this place last evening, my beloved; and most melancholy was our arrival. When we came within view of the park, my poor dear friend begged me to assist her to rise from her recumbent position.

"How thankful ought I to be, Mary," said she, "at being permitted to reach home ere I die. How verdant, how serene, how lovely, every thing here appears! See how the glorious sun has tinged the landscape, and now behold his last rays are shedding a golden light on the oriel window of the church—that church, dear friend, where I shall soon repose. How often have I entertained this thought of late, and longed to take up my everlasting rest there, away from all the dishonor and shame that have rendered life insupportable! How calm, how beautiful it looks! Never did weary traveller hail the end of his toilsome voyage with a more thankful spirit than I do the approaching termination of mine. You will think it a puerile feeling, dear Mary, yet, nevertheless, it gives me comfort that my earthly remains will repose in a spot where no harsh eye will fall on my grave, and where those only who have known and loved me since my birth will dwell on it. *They* will not believe me guilty: no, a mother's purity and a father's honor will vouch to them for the innocence of her who so lately left her happy home, and who so soon returned to it, blighted in fame and health, to leave it no more. Yes, the returning so accompanied, supported by parents, loved and honored by all; and cheered by the presence of the dear and faithful friend of her infancy, whose whole life is an unsullied page of brightest virtue—yes, this is to be blessed! Your presence proves my freedom from guilt to all here; and I thank you, Mary, with a heart overflowing with gratitude and affection, for this invaluable proof of friendship."

The old gray-headed servants met us at the door, sorrow imprinted on every face. My poor Augusta had a faint smile for each, but she was too much exhausted to speak; and we bore her to the cheerful apartment she had always occupied in other and happier days. I cannot tell you, my beloved, how much the sight of this chamber agitated me, by recalling to memory the blooming creature, full of life and hope, whom I had so often, and so lately, beheld in it; and thus forcing me to contrast that bright vision with the pale and fragile be-

ing before me, on whose brow the characters of death are but too plainly traced. There she lay reclined on the sofa, her long lids closed, and large drops stealing from beneath them down her still beautiful face. When she had gained some degree of composure, and found herself again alone with me, her eyes wandered all over the room, fixing, with a tender interest, on every object; and she said—

"It is strange, dear friend, that, on looking around me here, I could almost fancy that all that has occurred within the last few months has been a fearful dream, every thing appears so exactly as in former happy times. Ah, there is nothing changed but me!"

She wept on my bosom for a few minutes; but hearing the step of her mother, she endeavored to subdue her emotions, although I observed that the watchful eye of affection had quickly discovered them.

"Mother," said Augusta, "let me see good Dr. Wilmington early to-morrow, and receive the sacrament from his hands. I wish that you, and my father too, should share this consolation with me; and you also, dear friend," she added, turning to me. "I feel so tranquil, so happy, now that I am in my home"—and she embraced her mother—"that I long to render thanks to the Almighty, who has listened to my prayers, and vouchsafed this blessing."

She expressed a hope that her father would enable her to bequeath a provision of five thousand pounds to Miss Montressor, and pay a yearly allowance to the nurse of Lord Annandale's son as an incentive to her to take care of the child.

"Poor Caroline Montressor!" said she; "it is so painful to be wholly dependent on her aunt," (for Augusta knows not that Mrs. Wickenham is no more,) "and it is dangerous to be poor, when the principles are not deeply fixed. Let this donation, dearest mother, be notified to her, as a last proof of my regard."

I am sure that if Augusta desired them to bestow half their fortune on any one, these adoring parents would instantly consent to her desire; for their only source of comfort seems to exist in a compliance with her wishes. You shall hear from me again to-morrow, my beloved; until then, adieu.

Augusta has had a tranquil night, and appears more composed. She desired that all the old servants might be permitted to be present when she received the sacrament. Her wish was obeyed; and a more touching sight it would be impossible to imagine than that of this angelic creature, reduced almost to a breathing shadow, reclined on the sofa, with her father, mother, and myself, bending over her, and all the gray-headed domestics kneeling around.

"Before I receive the sacred elements you are about to administer to me, Dr. Wilmington," said she, "I wish, in the presence of all these mortal witnesses, and in the presence of that merciful God, to whom the secrets of all hearts are known, to declare, with the lips of a dying woman, my perfect innocence of the crime of which I am accused; and my deep and heartfelt contrition for having, by a want of prudence and decorum, lent a semblance of probability to the charge. I avow the error of my conduct, in having too much disregarded worldly opinion; and ask pardon of Almighty God, for having furnished cause for scandal, and led those who have condemned me to form erroneous conclusions."

There was not a dry eye in the room; even that of the venerable pastor was dimmed with tears, as he witnessed this act of humility in one whose besetting sin he knew to be pride.

"I wish, also," resumed Augusta, "to express my contrition at not having taken the pains that every wife should take to conciliate her husband, as I, too late, feel that had I done so, mine never would have condemned me unheard."

He administered the sacrament to her, of which we also partook; but not until he had given us one of the most impressive and touching discourses that ever fell from human lips.

Augusta is now asleep; a blessed calm seems spread over, and a faint smile plays on her pale lip; the rays of the setting sun have penetrated through the muslin curtains, casting a bright shade of rose over every object around, and tinging her face with a radiance that renders it of almost unearthly beauty. No, never, in the brightest days of health, did I behold her so lovely as at this moment. She moves—I must leave you.

Alas! my dear, dear friend is no more! She passed away from this life without a struggle or sigh; and is now, I humbly trust, an angel in heaven. Though prepared to lose her, I thought not that she was so soon to leave us; and I feel the blow more poignantly, because I thought it more distant. I left off writing to you on seeing her move; and, on approaching

her, discovered that she had ceased to breathe. Her poor father entered a moment after, and found that I had fainted. Do not be alarmed about me, dearest; I am better now; and having to assist good Dr. Wilmington in endeavoring to console the heart stricken parents of my lost friend, I feel the exertion most beneficial to me.

Never was there any thing more touching than the appearance of Augusta in the sleep of death. An expression of beatitude is impressed on her calm and marble-like face, that renders it almost divine; and a stranger would suppose that she could not have numbered above twelve or thirteen years. When I behold her with that heavenly countenance, my grief becomes acute; for there is something inexpressibly soothing in dwelling on that angelic face. Poor dear Lord and Lady Vernon find the same consolation, and have sent express for two of the best artists from London, to make a picture, and a cast, from which a bust is to be executed of her. How I wish you, my beloved, were here to see her! for never before did death assume so lovely, so blessed an aspect. Who, that could behold that tranquil brow, and angelic repose, could imagine the anguish that has preyed upon her pure heart during the last few weeks? But she has escaped from it now, and is in that blessed kingdom where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest;" where we, I humbly trust, may one day be united to her.

Ever your own

MARY.

FROM THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

MORDAUNT, I have destroyed her!—she is no more!—and I—I who fancied I knew her—could indulge the vain hope, even until the last that she would have borne up against the stain attempted to be cast on her honor. It was my mad passion that drew shame and degradation on her name; it was *I* who consigned this pure and lovely being to an untimely grave, leaving her parents childless, to mourn their misplaced confidence in one so wholly unworthy as I have proved myself to be. Of *her* innocence they never could have a doubt—as who could, that really knew her?—but of my weak and wicked conduct, in paying her those continual and marked attentions, to which no married woman can be subjected without a loss of reputation, they can form but one opinion; and that one my conscience tells me, I have but too well merited.

I am leaving England—perhaps for ever. My mind is so tortured that I can arrange no plans. Oh! why had I not courage to fly from her when I first discovered the state of my heart?—But no; selfish and cruel as even the most obdurate could be, thoughtless of aught save my own gratification, I continued to hover round her until my passion became too evident, and thus lent a color to the false charges against her. Never, never can I forgive myself! *I*, who could not bear to absent myself from her presence for a few hours, must now learn to bear the soul-harrowing conviction, that I shall see her no more; that she, the loveliest, the purest of her sex, is in the early grave to which my unworthy passion has conducted her. I embark for Spain to-morrow. I can write no more. Your unhappy friend,

NOTTINGHAM.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

I AM a wretch indeed, Delphine, and the measure of my crimes is full. Augusta the lovely, the pure, the wronged Augusta is no more; and has found in death a refuge from the shame my vile plots brought on her name. Fool, fool, that I was, not to have foreseen, that a being of a nature like hers never could have supported a suspicion of dishonor.

I have destroyed her! *I*, whom she loved and trusted, and who should have shielded her from the breath of evil, was the serpent who deliberately coiled around her heart to sting it mortally. There is a weight of guilt on my soul that oppresses it beyond endurance. I loathe my own existence; and am filled with self-abhorrence, by reflections that pursue me, night and day, with unremitting bitterness—eternally suggesting the recollection of this lovely creature, as she was when I first used my evil influence over her innocent mind, which not all my arts could corrupt, and whom, by my fiend-like machinations, I have sent, in a few short months to an early grave, as a refuge from the shame I had brought on her.

This fatal intelligence was communicated to me by Lord Annandale. Even

he, senseless as he is, is shocked; for he believed not that she was seriously ill. If he knew who it was that destroyed her! And he offers me consolation, too; dwells on my indulgence towards her errors, and the kind excuses I made for her when he had discovered her guilt! Oh, this unmerited praise, how it pierces my heart! —that heart which could, with unexampled and malicious cruelty, steel itself against the pleadings of humanity, and persevere in destroying so pure, so guileless a creature.

Lord Annandale says, that he has given orders to stop all legal proceedings, now that death has released him from a marriage he wished to dissolve; and that as soon as a decent time shall have elapsed he will call on me for the fulfilment of my promise of becoming his. Little does this weak man dream of the difference between the innocent being he has repudiated, and the guilty one he would take to his arms. Little thinks he, that the one on whose brow he would place the coronet of his ancestral line, is the crouching, trembling slave of a low ruffian; a wretch, whose hands are steeped in blood, and whose lips may, at any hour, stamp disgrace and infamy on the future Countess of Annandale.

Let me come to you, Delphine, and rest beneath your roof until I become a wife, and entitled to some legal protection. Here, I have no friend—nay, no one to whom I could give the term, even in its broad sense, except the Comtesse Hohenlinden; and her house, the scene of continual gaiety and dissipation, would be no fit abode for me under my present circumstances. Let me have a line, to say I may come, and I shall instantly leave England, where every object reminds me of all that I wish to forget—my crimes, and their punishment. Once the wife of Annandale, I will become a different creature; my new duties shall be scrupulously performed, my past sins deeply repented; and atoned.

There may be still pardon for guilt even dark as mine; and if that wretch, whose power hangs threatening over me, like the sword of Damocles suspended but by a thread, molests me not, I may again know peace on earth.

A letter has this moment arrived, apprising me that Augusta has secured me five thousand pounds, as a last token of regard. To *me*,—who betrayed—who destroyed her! This is one of the rewards of my crime: it is the price of the blood of my victim! And she could think of me—dear, suffering angel! and that kindly, too, even when the hand of death was on her; while I was anticipating the succession to her position, and, for the attainment of this evil object, not hesitating to sacrifice her fame, and, consequently, her life.

This last act of hers has flooded my heart with tenderness which runs over at my eyes; and I feel relieved by the tears that seem inexhaustible. Would that I could shed them upon your bosom, Delphine! and that you could speak comfort to the tortured heart of your

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THE papers have announced to me, *chère* Delphine, that the unfortunate man arrested for the murder of my poor aunt has been tried, found guilty, and condemned to death. Oh, gracious God! how bitter are my feelings at the reflection that *I* knew his innocence—that a word of mine might have saved him, and that I dared not utter it! How dreadful, how appalling, to know that the existence of a fellow-creature depends on me, and be denied the power of saving him! Here is another crime added to the fearful catalogue of mine—another life, which I have been the means of sacrificing! Where, where will the fatal consequences of my guilt end? I cannot banish the terrible thought from my mind, that the blood of this innocent man rests on my head. In what a labyrinth of guilt do I find myself entangled—one crime following fast on the steps of the other! I wonder I do not lose my senses, and almost wish I did; for madness, if it produced obliviousness of this last year, would be preferable—oh, how infinitely preferable!—to reason.

Imagination pictures this unfortunate man, led forth to the scene of his death; his white locks waving in the breeze; his tottering limbs bending beneath the weight of his languid frame, and his eyes turned towards that heaven, where, alone, he believes his innocence to be known. I see his wretched wife and children, bowed down by despair and anguish, surrounded by an unpitying crowd, who, believing him culpable, sympathise not with the grief of his family. I see him launched into eternity, to meet from his God that mercy de-

nied him on earth; while *I—I*, who know his innocence, and might have saved him, have allowed him to be sacrificed! In utter hopelessness, I have thrown myself upon my knees before that Power whose might I feel, but whose clemency I hardly dare to supplicate—for I am steeped in guilt that almost defies hope. What atonement can be made to the widow and orphans? what can efface the indelible shame inflicted on their guiltless lives, by the crime affixed to their equally guiltless father! I tremble in dismay before the terrors of an avenging God, whose mercies I have slighted in the hours of prosperity, but whose wrath I dare not anticipate.

I loathe life, poisoned as it is by the consciousness of crimes that render it nearly insupportable; yet I turn with fear and trembling from death—that passage to an eternity of punishment, which conscience tells me I have but too deeply merited. My dreams are haunted by the sweet face of the angelic Augusta—her whom I so ruthlessly condemned to an untimely grave; the stern and reproachful countenance of my murdered aunt looks menacingly at me; and the assassin's wild and demoniacal laugh rings in my ear, as he threatens me with exposure and infamy. Oh, God! oh, God! how long can nature sustain this torture?

Pity me, Delphine—though I am unworthy of pity, for my life has been one continued career of selfishness and turpitude; and it is only lately that I have awakened to a sense of the faults that have plunged me in guilt, from the depths of which no ray of hope is visible. It is solely by the aid of opiates that I have been able to procure sleep for some months. How my health has not sunk under the weight of remorse and regret that oppresses me, seems miraculous: but it is only the good and beloved who are snatched away: the bad and unloved are left on earth as a punishment and an example.

My maid has just told me that the young man who was to have married the daughter of my poor aunt's faithful steward, renounced her, on hearing the charge against her father; and as she was deeply attached to him, his desertion has preyed so heavily upon her, that, even before the condemnation of her father, her health had become so impaired as to leave little hope of her recovery. This, also, is one of the results of my not having declared his innocence! But when will the results of my crimes terminate? Adieu! adieu!

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Ma chère Caroline:—How much pain does it give me to be compelled to tell you that I cannot receive you again beneath my roof! Do you think I could have been so unkind towards the friend of my youth as not to have proposed her coming to me immediately on the death of her aunt, had not a cruel and insurmountable obstacle opposed it? You know, *chère amie*, when you left France, that the expenses of our vast establishment had greatly embarrassed our finances; but, alas! you did not know that the passion for gaming, so fatally indulged in by my husband, had totally ruined us. *Maman*, after having repeatedly assisted to retard the ruin that threatened, at length became wearied by such frequent demands on her liberality; and, influenced by le Père Maubois, who, I formerly told you, had acquired a perfect dominion over her, has retired to Italy, attended by him, and has there fixed her abode, refusing to lend us any further aid.

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you would pity us were you to witness the privations we endure.

I am sure *notre tante* only patronises us to vex *maman*, who has thrown us off; but, as she is rich and old, we must please her, and my husband will be her heir: I only hope she will not long keep him an expectant one. *Comme c'est drole*, that Miladi Annandale should die because she was suspected! How strange and exaggerated your compatriots are in their notions! *Je ne comprend rien de tout cela.* I only comprehend that, if every lady in Paris who is suspected chose, therefore, to die, we should have very few left in society.

Do you know, *ma chère amie*, that you become *tout à fait originale dans vos idées*, and that you really require to leave your land of fogs, and mix with reasonable people here, to dispel the *ennui*, or devils blue, as the English say, that have taken possession of your brain. You think yourself very wicked, guilty of *des grands crimes*, and you write as the heroines of tragedy speak: but I think you only an *unlucky*, and not a wicked person; and so thinks *mon mari*, to whom I have showed your letters. It is the motive, and not the results, that constitutes the crime.

Your first error turned out unfortunately—that was simply an indiscretion; and, had not *ce mauvais sujet* that caught your youthful fancy been ruined, and left *sans sous*, he would not have again appeared to cast a shadow on the horizon of your prospects—this I call unlucky. When you opened the window, and he entered, you had no evil motive towards your aunt, *malgré* she was *un peu revêche*, and not *un peu ennuyeuse*. His poverty tempted him to take her money and jewels; and his safety, probably, urged him to the rest. All this was very unlucky; but *his* poverty was, as I think I have satisfactorily proved, the cause of all *cette affaire tragique;* and you have, consequently, nothing of which to accuse yourself that I can see, except not having chosen a lover neither likely to ruin himself nor to be ruined—nor capable, even in a case of necessity, of strangling old ladies.

With regard to Miladi Annandale, you have been, also, unlucky. It is true, the *triste* position in which you found yourself *chez madame votre tante*, compelled you to urge your young friend to a marriage for which she had lost all taste: but, had she been a reasonable woman, she might have, notwithstanding, been very happy; for, with a good fortune, a brilliant position, and a weak, indulgent husband, what more could she desire? It is not your fault that all these *agrémens* sufficed not to satisfy her—the fault rests with herself. She falls in love with that imbecile *milord*, whose stupid name I forget; you wish to enable her to marry him, and take yourself the man she dislikes: what could be more rational or agreeable? She mars this judicious and feasible scheme solely by her unaccountable scruples and false notions; then, perversely, will not be consoled; and consequently—dies: while you, absurdly, blame yourself; as if you, or any other reasonable person, could have possibly foreseen such a termination to the comedy you had prepared, but which her *entêtement* alone has converted into a tragedy.

You are unhappy, too, because she has left you an independence. Of all the incomprehensible occurrences which you have related to me, your contrition on this account puzzles my brain the most; for it appears to me that such a circumstance should only be a cause of rejoicing. You say that she was an angel; and, as I have formed no very definite notions of the angelic state, I am perfectly willing to believe your assertion—especially as she was, certainly, utterly unlike all the women I ever either saw or heard described. Supposing, then, your classification to be accurate, the earth, undoubtedly, was no fit place for her; and you should, therefore, exult that she has repaired to a more congenial sphere, leaving you the possession of her terrestrial honors.

This, *chère* Caroline, is my philosophy. I owe it to you; for you must remember, when you first enlightened me, I was the slave of certain old-fashioned prejudices, which you persuaded me to discard. Ever since this period, I have endeavored to make life as agreeable as possible, leaving the rest to chance, which you have taught me to believe produces all things for the best. I have always thought, and your letters have more fully convinced me, that poverty is the cause of every evil. I mean, therefore, to eschew this most tempting of all the demons to the utmost of my power; and as the bequests of your aunt, and *la romanesque miladi*, have secured you a comfortable independence, you are safe, even should you not marry *ce faible milord*. Why abandon the philosophy you used to be so proud of, and in which you took such pains to make me a proficient? If you find England so dull, why not come to Paris, and establish yourself with some one of the many *dames*

de haut rang, ruinées, who would be too happy to enact the *rôle* of *chaperon* until you marry?

Adieu, chère amie! Mon mari m'a chargé de vous dire mille choses aimables de sa part. Write to me often, and believe me always

Votre amie devouée

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

MISS MONTRESSOR TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

IT is now a year since I have written to you, *chère* Delphine: your last letter gave me so much pain by its philosophy —that pernicious philosophy, which I shall ever accuse myself of having instilled into you—that I had not spirits to write to you of aught but my regrets, and in these you have convinced me you take no interest, have no sympathy.

Oh, Delphine! that philosophy failed me the moment when, wounded and despairing, I tried to lean on it for consolation. It stood revealed to me shorn of all its sophistry, and hideous in its deformity; to remorse it could give no answer, to grief no balm. It seemed like some chimera dire; the creation of an excited brain, that mocked my anguish, and added to my despair. When I discovered its fallacy, Delphine, I shuddered at recollecting that you, also, were its dupe, that *I* had made you so, and I prayed for power to exorcise this foul spirit from the breast into which I had introduced it. I pray so still, and entreat you to believe that nothing but unhappiness can await those who trust in it, as I know from bitter, bitter experience.

Every line in your letter was a dagger that pierced my soul, and the wounds bled not the less that I had furnished the weapon.

In a week I am to become the wife of Lord Annandale, to take the place of that angel whom I destroyed. I shall fear to see her in all the rooms which she once occupied; and my heart melts into tenderness before the visions my fancy creates, as I behold her approving the change in my sentiments—a change that she would have hailed with such satisfaction.

I have been living in solitude during the last year, in a cottage near Richmond. I have read much, and thought more—I hope not without profit. I have renounced all faith in the pernicious doctrines that so long perverted my mind, and have laid down a system of conduct for my future life, which, if it redeem not my past crimes, will, at least, be a security against the committal of any future ones.

Adieu, chère Delphine! *Votre amie,*

CAROLINE.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO MISS MONTRESSOR.

IT gave me great pleasure, *ma chère* Caroline, to see your hand-writing again, after so long and unaccountable a silence. *Vraiment c'étoit bien méchante de votre part*, to leave me so long in ignorance of your destiny. You deserve a severe lecture; but, as I have nearly as great a dislike to giving as receiving such proofs of interest, I shall spare you, hoping this generosity on my side will be rewarded by a more regular correspondence on yours.

And so you are on the eve of being transformed into *Madame la Comtesse d'Annandale.* I wish you joy with all my heart; and, I trust, that your new position will bestow on you all the happiness that wealth, station, and the various *agrémens* you possess ought to secure. That they may do so, let me counsel you to abandon the romantic and exaggerated notions you have lately acquired—notions peculiar to your countrywomen; and which tend to render them dissatisfied with the actual and positive good within their reach, because it falls short of some fancied one of which they have dreamed, or read in romances.

You have been of late disposed to view all *en noir.*—This is neither wise nor philosophical, and, because I bantered you on this sombre tendency, you cease to write to me. You have suffered an excited imagination to represent le Chevalier de Carency as the fearful hero of a melo-drame, instead of a *mauvais sujet*, which he is; and you then become terrified at the phantom which you have yourself created. Had you assailed him with ridicule, of which all men, and especially vain ones, are so susceptible, *he* would have been more tractable, and you, *chère* Caroline, would have suffered less annoyance.

Mais à present, tout cela est fini, and the brilliancy of your new position will console you for the troubles of the past. Would that I could tell you that mine was ameliorated since I last wrote to you. *Hélas!* it is any thing but agreeable; but,

as dwelling on the subject will not render it less painful, I will spare you and myself the useles chagrin of recapitulating my grievances.

Apropos of grievances, *mon pauvre* Florestan, is still tormented by his abominable creditors, who menace him with arrest. *Mais le cher homme s'amuse toujours, malgré tout cela.* He is really a philosopher, and reduces to practice what others adopt only in theory. His embarrassments are a great source of discomfort to me; for, independently of their frequently depriving me of the pleasure of his society, by compelling his absence, in order to avoid his creditors, it furnishes his tiresome aunt with an excuse for prohibiting me from entering into general society: as if my staying at home, which *ennuies* me to death, could pay poor Florestan's debts. *Mais qûe voulez-vous?* Old people, and, above all, old aunts, are invariably stupid, and prone to torment, and never are at all amusing, except on the stage, when their peculiarities are *mis en evidence.*

The lectures of *madame la duchesse, ma tante*, are interminable; and, now that Florestan is not, as hitherto, present to share them, they fall still more heavily on me. The house resembles nothing but a convent, which, of the two, would be less disagreeable, for the abbess would not have the knowledge of my past indiscretions to convert into a theme for homilies and reproaches, which form the constant subject of *ma tante's* conversation. *Mais je vous demande pardon, ma chère, pour vous avoir ennuyé avec cette triste tirade:* I really had determined on not entering on my domestic chagrins, but some few have escaped from my pen; be grateful that I have stopped so soon.

I wish you would induce *milord* to come to Paris, that I might again embrace you; and assure you, *vivâ voce*, how truly I am

Ma chère Caroline's *Amie devouée,*

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

You know not how much it pains me, *ma chère* Delphine, to discover, by your last letter, that Florestan is menaced with St. Pelagie, and you scarcely less than a prisoner in the sombre residence of his aunt. I entreat your acceptance of the enclosed sum: any banker at Paris will give you gold for the bank-note; and do not imagine that, by its acceptance, you put me to the least inconvenience; I am only too happy to be of use to one for whom I entertain so sincere a regard.

It is a great relief to my feelings that we have come to spend the first month of our wedded life at Annandale Castle—a fine seat of my husband's, where Augusta has never been. Here is no portrait, no memorial of her, to remind me that she ever existed; nothing, save the never-dying, still, small voice of conscience, which incessantly reproaches me.

Lord Annandale is all kindness—all affection: and every thing around me is marked by a splendor and taste that might satisfy the most ambitious and fastidious of my sex. Now, therefore, for the first time, I am mistress of the rank and wealth for which I have so long sighed; and for the attainment of which I have committed such fearful crimes. Yet, do I enjoy the coveted baubles, now that they are mine? Alas, no! the thought of how they have been obtained destroys all; and gladly—oh, how gladly! would I exchange them for obscurity, could I obtain peace of mind.

The husband who cherishes me and smiles on me would turn away in horror, knew he my crimes, or that he was the dupe to my arts: and the very attendants, who approach me with such reverential deference, would shrink back if they only dreamed of the turpitude of the new-made bride. I am forced to exert every energy to conceal the depression of my spirits—a depression attributed by Lord Annandale to a nervous illness, brought on by the awful death of my aunt, and increased by that of Augusta. *He* often compliments me on my sensibility (think what I must feel at such unmerited commendations!) and redoubles his attentions, in order to subdue my sadness.

He is, naturally, a kind-hearted and good-natured man, with gentle and agreeable manners; his only failing, and it is a venial one too, is his excessive vanity, which has led him into situations in which his morals have been injured, and his sensibility blunted. He is so grateful for the high opinion of his mental and personal qualifications which he believes me to entertain, that his complaisance and indulgence for me are unbounded, and his generosity equally so.

Yesterday he presented me with the family diamonds, which are magnificent. How many thoughts did the sight of them

recall! Well do I remember, when, the day previous to Augusta's wedding, I was dwelling with longing and envious eyes on their dazzling lustre, how she turned away, regardless of them; and only answered me with tears, when I expressed my astonishment that she could be so insensible to the pleasure of possessing them.

They are now mine; but do they give *me* pleasure? Alas! no; for they remind me, that, to obtain them, I have lost a jewel beyond all price—the peace that a conscience free from guilt bestows.

When I look round on the stately saloons, splendid pictures, and magnificent furniture, of this fine castle, I almost wonder that, being its mistress, I can be otherwise than happy; yet, too late I find, that the splendor purchased by wicked schemes, and successful artifices, can never give happiness. I forget the *end* in the *means* used to attain it; and turn with disappointment from possessions which cannot banish the sense of remorse from my mind.

Yet, I am not ungrateful to Lord Annandale—far from it. Nay, more; a warmer feeling of gratitude than I ever thought I should experience towards him fills my heart. It is a mingled sentiment of pity for his being the dupe of the plot I have practised upon him, and thankfulness for the affection with which he treats me. I wish to repay him, by every exertion in my power for his welfare and happiness; and think, that if there be still a chance of peace for me on earth, it rests on the fulfilment of the duties my new position demands. When he tenderly reproaches me for my altered character and unusual gravity, I feel the color rise to my cheeks, and vainly endeavor to assume the semblance of gaiety; but I cannot long sustain the effort, and my spirits soon droop again.

He expresses alarm for my health, and proposes change of climate; but what change of climate or scene can ever banish from my memory the fatal recollections that poison my existence, and dash the cup of peace from my thirsty and fevered lips?

Adieu, *chère* Delphine! *votre amie*,

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

DELPHINE, Delphine, I am lost! The assassin is here—he has found me! and well do I know that neither the arm of love, nor the protection of our princely household, can shield me from this fiend in human shape.

I was regaining some portion of my lost peace—the present was less bitter, the future less frowning; and I began to hope that, by a deep contrition for the past, and a strict fulfilment of my new duties, I might ultimately obtain pardon from the Almighty. But it was not to be; for *me* there is no peace either here or hereafter: and terror, vague yet irresistible, palsies my nerves!

I left my chamber this morning with spirits less depressed than usual. The day was beautiful, and all nature seemed rejoicing. When I looked on the vast woods around this princely domain, and the countless herds of deer, grazing on the green lawns that intersperse them, the repose and grandeur of the scene delighted me; and I remembered, with pleasure, that this noble spot called me mistress. Its lord joined me on the terrace, and, marking the pleasure with which I gazed on the view, he drew me more affectionately to his side, and whispered kind, fond words, expressive of his increased partiality to Annandale Castle, now that it had pleased me, and become a witness of his happiness.

How soothing is affection! and how do those who, like me, have known little of this sweetener of life, turn, with awakened tenderness, to him who administers the cordial! But why do I dwell on this now? Alas! I cling to the memory of this bright morning, and the hopes I then dared to indulge, as the last remnant of domestic peace; for the destroyer is at hand, and for his victim there is no escape.

Soon after breakfast, my husband proposed driving me in a pony phæton; and we entered it, in cheerful spirits. Having proceeded through the beautiful grounds, he wished to show me a picturesque point of view at the other side of a neighboring village; in passing through which we suddenly came on *him* whose sight nearly deprived me of reason. Hearing the wheels of a carriage, he turned round quickly, and as I caught his glance, I uttered a piercing shriek, and fell back, nearly fainting. Lord Annandale instantly stopped, and, in the kindest way, inquired the cause of my alarm; which, when I had recovered, I attributed to the sight of a child running across the road, and my fears that it would be trampled by the horses.

I proposed returning to the castle, feeling too much agitated and unwell to con-

she had delivered the parcel; she said she had, and "hoped *madame la comtesse* would prohibit that strange and fearful man from coming again, as some of the men-servants had made such disagreeable observations on his visits."

While she was yet speaking, Lord Annandale tapped at the door, and entered, looking discomposed and offended.

"I must ask you, my dear Lady Annandale," said he, "to insist on your *femme de chambre's* paying more attention to your commands in future; for again has her very suspicious-looking and disreputable acquaintance been seen here, and withdrawing, as I am informed, from another interview with her."

I saw that Claudine, though not comprehending more than a few words (my husband having spoken in English,) was about to disclaim the acquaintance, and avow the truth; so, though I trembled with emotion, I made a desperate effort to control myself, and desired Claudine to leave the room. She obeyed my mandate, but reluctantly, and in tears, and evidently most impatient to justify herself to my lord. As soon as she had withdrawn, I told him—though how my inventive powers could act at such a moment I now wonder—that the man in question was a near relative of Claudine's that he had been unfortunate, and came to see her for the last time previous to leaving England; that she, poor thing, had felt acutely his distress, but had promised me to receive him no more.

Lord Annandale was immediately pacified, pitied poor Claudine, and offered some money to assist to pay her cousin's journey to Italy. Nay, he wished to speak to her himself, feeling sorry at having spoken harshly on the subject; but I dissuaded him from this proceeding.

So here am I again, Delphine, entered into the crooked path of untruth; and compromised, to a certain extent, before Claudine, who will naturally see that there is some mystery attached to this man's visits which I dare not avow, and the odium of which is cast upon her. All this weighs me down, but I feel there is no escape; a temporary respite I may purchase, but heaven only knows how short that respite may be, or how soon the recklessness of this monster may provoke some fearful *esclandre*.

I have had a most painful and humiliating scene with Claudine. She wept passionately, complained of being disgraced in the eyes of my lord, her reputation blemished in the opinion of the servants, and of being treated with insolence by that "*terrible mauvais sujet*," as she justly pronounced my evil genius to be.

I had much difficulty in pacifying her; was compelled to humble myself to accomplish it; and the gift of my gold Briguet repeater scarcely seemed to console her for the accusation of being a friend of him in whose hands my fortune, fame, and life, are placed. This it is, Delphine, to have committed one crime! To what endless subterfuges and humiliations does it not lead! but all this infamy and peril I must bear; and never henceforth can I assert the due authority of a mistress over a servant in whose custody is the fatal secret, the slightest reference to which could, at any moment, blanch the cheek, and baffle the self-possession, of her guilty and degraded mistress.

Adieu, chère amie! votre

CAROLINE.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

Mille remercimens, ma chère Caroline, for your generous and timely assistance. You must permit me to consider it as a loan, which I trust I may be able, ere long, to repay: though I must ever remain your debtor for the friendship that prompted the kindness.

I am *au désespoir* at finding that you are still pursued by that *monstre*, De Carency: but have you not a law in England, which I think I have heard of, called an alien-bill, or some such term, by which you could get this wretch sent out of the country? *Ah! que je regrette le bon vieux temps*, when a *lettre de cachet* could have been obtained!

Mais, en vérité, ma bonne amie, you take things too much to heart. You are too nervous, too easily alarmed; and this timidity gives De Carency a power over you, that he will not fail to use to his profit, and to your continual annoyance—if not, ultimately, to your destruction. Prohibit your servants from letting any suspicious-looking person enter your doors; and, if he writes to you, commit the letters to the flames. Pursue this conduct but for a short time, and he will soon cease to torment you. He can gain nothing by exposing you to Lord Annandale, and would risk being arrested; for, in such a despe-

rate dilemma, you, of course, could not hesitate to give him up to justice, as the assassin of your aunt.

You could assert, that having been acquainted with him when he was admitted to the best society, you, in pity to his poverty and degradation, had relieved him: that, knowing the severity of your aunt, and her dislike to foreigners, you had permitted him to come at night to receive from a window the pecuniary aid you afforded: and then detail the fact of his forcible entrance, and the fearful catastrophe that followed. *Enfin*, tell the truth in all, except the circumstance of his ever having been more than a common acquaintance to you; and resolutely vow that he has invented this tale in order to extort money from you by threatening to circulate it, and to terrify you into a concealment of his guilt.

To carry my advice into effect demands great nerve and self-control; you used to possess both, but I fear they have deserted you now that you most need them. Remember you have no other means of extricating yourself from the trammels of this monster; so take courage, and adopt my counsel, and all may yet be well.

Pauvre Florestan *est dans Saint Pelagie*, and his cruel aunt refuses to pay his debts. I have sent all my jewels to be sold, and *le duc, comme un bon ami*, is raising money to procure his freedom. The first day he was arrested I was half dead with sorrow; for I fancied that my poor Florestan would be shut, in a damp dark cell, chained to the wall, fed on bread and water, and his hands confined. But I find it is no such thing: *au contraire*, Lisette, my *femme de chambre*, whom I sent to him, being too ill to go myself, tells me that he has a very comfortable apartment; had two or three friends, who are also confined there, to dinner, *un repas très recherché*; was served by a *restaurant* of the domicile; and instead of his hands being secured, they are busily employed in playing *écarté* all the evening.

In short, as Lisette tells me, he leads a far more agreeable life there than he did in this *triste maison*, where he, *pauvre garçon*, was as *ennuyé* as I am. He read to his friends the passage of my letter in which I detailed the horrors to which I fancied he was exposed; and Lisette says they laughed heartily at my notions of St. Pelagie. How like Florestan—*n'est ce pas?*—to preserve his gaiety even in a prison!

Adieu, *ma chère* Caroline! Remember that true philosophy consists in enjoying the good one has attained, and not in lamenting the means used for its attainment; more especially when such retrospections cannot benefit. With your fortune I should have nothing to desire—or, at least, not desire any thing long that it could supply.

Tout à vous,

DELPHINE, MAUQUISE DE VILLEROI.

FROM THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

WE have come to London, *chère* Delphine, to which my husband was summoned the day after my last letter to you, by an express from the ministers, who wish him to take office. He is gratified by this distinction, and I like it because he does; for his affection has awakened a reciprocal feeling in my heart, which I had thought callous, and steeled against soft emotions. But where is the nature that can resist the gentle influence of kindness? not in woman's heart, I am sure.

My first entrance into this house was very painful: how many scenes which I would wish to efface for ever from my memory, did it recall! Lord Annandale had considerately changed the arrangement of the whole house; and the apartments appropriated to me are not those occupied by the dear, the wronged Augusta. The furniture, too, is all new; so that no vestige of its former mistress remains. Yet she is seldom absent from my memory; *that* recalls her mild and beautiful face to each apartment where she so lately dwelt in innocence and loveliness: *that* gives back the touching sound of her sweet voice and affectionate words; and renews, too, the cankering reflection, that I destroyed her.

Lord Annandale's son, the child of which she was so fond, was brought to me the day after my arrival. He came bounding into the room, and rushed to embrace me; but on approaching near enough to distinguish my face, he stopped abruptly short, and said—"No, it is not my own mamma!" and an expression of deep disappointment clouded his little face.

It is clear, he still remembers her. Poor dear Augusta! who that ever experienced her gentleness and affection, could ever forget her? I must not dwell on this theme, for every thought connected with her, is fraught with sadness.

Already have all the ancient *habituées* of Annandale House flocked to my doors,

with professions of friendship, and smiles of welcome. But they find me changed —gravely, if not sadly changed; for I know them too well to esteem or respect them; and I wish to draw round me a circle widely different from theirs, composed of honorable and clever men, and virtuous and dignified women. Such are not rare in England, though they are not frequently to be met with in the circle arrogating to itself the appellation of *exclusive*—an appellation I trust it will ever retain—keeping without its pale all the good and wise, whose qualities must ever unfit them for belonging to it.

And yet, it was in this demoralised society that a year ago, I was ambitious to enter! But what changes may not a year produce? I have learned to appreciate virtue, by having strayed from its path; and discovered the hollowness, the deformity of vice, by having unhappily, approached it too nearly.

How erroneously would persons judge of the English character, who formed their opinions of it from that class among which I formerly lived in London—a class which affects all the frivolity of French society, but which has none of its redeeming qualities—its gaiety, wit or ease! The more conscious I am of my own demerits, the more do I desire to avoid intimacy with those who are unworthy, and to dwell henceforth among persons I can respect and esteem.

Who can love virtue like those who have experienced the misery produced by vice? Ah, none! and I would fain cling to it (though deeply conscious of my unworthiness,) even as the wrecked mariner clings to the shore from which the waves are bearing him.

I am to be presented at court to-morrow, and am to wear, for the first time, the family jewels. It seems like yesterday that I saw poor Augusta wear them on her presentation, when her beauty attracted all eyes. Where is she now? But I must not dwell on this thought.

An aunt of Lord Annandale is to present me; an excellent old lady, and universally beloved and respected. She was absent from England when her nephew married poor Augusta, so never saw her: which is, perhaps, the reason why she is partial to me, not being able to compare me with one so every way my superior. Lady Wilmington is an especial favorite at court, and numbers among her friends the most estimable of the aristocracy, whose acquaintance she has already procured for me.

The Comtesse of Hohenlinden has left England, which I rejoice at; and her *coterie* here console themselves for the humiliating flatteries they administered to her when present, by the lavish abuse they bestow on her in her absence. Lord Annandale has quite set his heart on my making a brilliant appearanae to-morrow; he has even superintended the preparations for my *toilette*, and wishes me to wear, in addition to the family jewels, some valuable ones which he has given me.

I shall leave this letter unfinished, that I may write to you, to-morrow, the details of my presentation.

* * * * * *

Again, Delphine, the wretch who poisons my existence has asserted his fearful authority over me! and this time in a manner that convinces me that I have nothing to hope from his forbearance.

Lord Annandale dined with the ministers yesterday; and I was sitting in my boudoir, superintending the arrangement of some diamonds which my maid was attaching to my court-dress, when the groom of the chambers announced le Chevalier Carency, and that monster entered.

The case of jewels I held in my hand fell to the ground, and I uttered a faint shriek; while Claudine, who, in the elegantly dressed man of fashion before her, did not recognise the mysterious visitant of Annandale Castle, respectfully retired. He approached me with alacrity, kissed my hand with easy politeness, and said, that, having only that day arrived from Paris, he came to deliver, a letter and sundry messages, from our mutual friend, la Marquise de Villeroi. Though I dreaded finding myself alone with him, I dreaded still more the possibility of Claudine's recognising him, if suffered to remain, or to be a witness to an interview in which I felt a presentiment that new demands would be made; so I was glad to see her withdraw. I then asked him why he stood before me?

"The question is neither polite nor hospitable, *ma belle comtesse*," he replied with an air of the most insulting familiarity; "*mais n'importe*. I am no longer the ruined mendicant you saw at Annandale Castle, and whose apparition seemed to give you so little pleasure. Your compulsory liberality has enabled me to reassume that place in society to which my

birth entitles me: I flatter myself that my appearance would not discredit the most aristocratic *salon* in London;" and he looked in a large mirror with undisguised complacency. "But fortune owes me a grudge, and pursues me with a *guignon* as provoking as it is inconvenient. Last night I lost a considerable sum, the final remnant of your supply, and I am come to demand another. Seeing in the papers that *monsieur milord votre mari*, was to dine with the ministers (for the English papers leave us ignorant of none of the engagements of *les messieurs et dames à la mode*,) I determined on paying you a visit. Should *milord* arrive before I depart, you will, of course, present me to him as an old friend just arrived from Paris, and the bearer of a letter from your friend, la Marquise de Villeroi. *Sa seigneurie* will, of course, act *l'aimable*—I, *le gentil*: the acquaintance thus made, leave the rest to me: he shall present me to the persons I desire to know, and all will go off *à merveille*. I see that you disapprove this arrangement," added he, with a look of perfect nonchalance; "but I have taken it into my head to enter into fashionable society in London, and your husband is the person I have selected as *chaperon*."

"And you tell this to me," said I, my blood boiling with indignation; "to me, who know you for a robber—for an assassin!"

His countenance assumed a fearful expression of malice, as he glanced at me, and replied—

"Bah, bah! you still remember that little episode: but you appear to forget your own share in it. Who gave me ingress to the house, and who secured my egress from it? Without your aid, I could not have effected the objects to which you refer. But let that pass; I am not here to listen to your tragical reminiscences. I am come for money, and *must* have it quickly."

I declared that he had taken all my funds at Annandale Castle, and that I had no more.

"What! can you not ask your husband? He is still too short a time married to have ceased to be uxorious enough to be generous to you;" and he looked at me in a way that brought the blood to my cheeks.

"But there is no occasion to have recourse to his liberality," said he, "while these baubles can be converted into money," taking up the diamonds that lay scattered around; "they will do quite as well."

"They must not—cannot be yours!" said I, "they are the family jewels, in which I have only a life-interest."

"Bah, bah!" answered he, "I stand on no such idle ceremony,"

As he spoke, he gathered up the scattered diamonds, placed them in the case, and put it within his coat, which he buttoned over it. In vain I implored him not to take them, and promised to send him money the very next day. He was deaf to my entreaties; and, having said that, shortly, he would call again, and be presented to *milord*, he rang the bell, and, when the domestic arrived, took a respectful leave of me, and departed.

I am utterly confounded; and so agitated, by contending emotions, that I am incapable of thinking. Though the jewels are of great value, my husband attaches even more importance to them from the number of years they have been in the family, than from their intrinsic worth. How shall I be able to conceal that I no longer possess them? How get off appearing at court to-morrow? I am all in a tremor! I must lie down, for my head swims, and I can scarcely support myself.

Delphine, I would prefer death to seeing this wretch intrude himself into the presence of my husband, to remind me of a crime I would give worlds to forget, and the memory of which, ever since I became a wife, is more hateful to me than ever. Think of a miscreant, stained with theft—with murder—finding himself beneath the roof of an honorable man, and *I* tacitly sanctioning his monstrous effrontery by my silence! O God, have pity on me!

"Lord Annandale found me so ill when he returned, that he was the first to propose my abandoning all thoughts of going to the drawing-room to-day.

This is a reprieve; but, alas! a brief one; for in ten days more there will be another, and I shall be expected to go. The kindness of my husband melts me to tears—and this was the man I judged so harshly! How my heart reproaches me; and how I wish I were more worthy of his affection!

When Claudine asked me last night for the diamonds to fasten on my dress, I felt my cheeks glow as I told her that I had locked them up.

"*Madame la comtesse's* illness was very sudden," observed she; "for I thought I

had not seen *sa seigneurie* so well for a long time as just before that gentleman arrived.

I was painfully conscious that I again changed countenance.

"It was strange, *madame la comtesse*," resumed she, "that the tones of his voice, and the air of that gentleman quite startled me, by reminding me of that terrible man who came to *le château d'Annandale*."

Think how I trembled!

"One often does see such strange resemblances," continued she. "This gentleman is about the same height, but he has no whiskers; and then he has not a patch over his eye. *Enfin*, this is a *grand seigneur*, and the other was like a mendicant. Still the one reminds me of the other."

How I writhed while she spoke! I think I can perceive—but it may be only my timid sense of guilt that suggests the agprehensions—that she already associates in her mind the visits of this man, my sudden indisposition, and the disappearance of the diamonds.

My position is a fearful one, and becomes every day more precarious. The state of incessant agitation and alarm in which this wretch plunges me has destroyed my health; and there are moments when I feel such a total prostration of physical as well as moral strength, that I am led to think I cannot long sustain this life of wretchedness. This man is my scourge—the avenger of all my sins. Oh, may the Almighty accept the pangs I now endure as some atonement for my transgressions, and limit my sufferings to this life; permitting me to hope that, in the life to come, I may be pardoned.

Should my prophetic forebodings be realised—should death soon end the insupportable anguish I endure, I entreat—nay, more, I command you, Delphine, to make known to Lord and Lady Vernon, and Lord Annandale, the perfect innocence of the wronged Augusta.

To-day, Delphine, De Carency presented himself in due form at my door. The audacity of this man is not to be imagined. On hearing that I was indisposed, and not visible, he inquired for Lord Annandale and sent in his card; was shown into the library, and acted *l'aimable* so adroitly to my husband, representing himself as an old friend of mine, and the bearer of sundry messages to me from you, that he received an invitation to dine here on Thursday.

When Lord Annandale came to my dressing-room, and related the interview he had just had, I thought I should have fallen from my chair; but he was fastening one of the studs of his chemise, so did not observe my agitation.

"The expression of le Chevalier Carency's face does not please me," said Lord Annandale; "but his manners are remarkably insinuating, notwithstanding a certain *brusquerie* that occasionally breaks forth, indicating that he has spent most of his time in camps. But you say nothing of your friend, dearest, though he professes to have known you since your childhood!"

Think, Delphine, what must have been my feelings!

I said, that I certainly had known him in my early youth, but that I did not like nim.

"Yet we must be civil to him," replied Lord Annandale: "or he will return to Paris, and tell the Marquise de Villeroi, that you behave ill to your former friends. It is astonishing how soon foreigners make themselves *au fait* of what is passing in every country they visit," continued Lord Annandale, musingly: "le Chevalier Carency said some very civil and judicious things, too, about my speech in the House, the other night. By Jove! he understood the bearing of the question wonderfully. He certainly is very clever; and must have been a devilish good-looking fellow, too, *malgré* the *satanique* expression of his eyes and mouth."

The wretch has already discovered the *côté faible* of my husband, and has availed himself of it most dexterously, if I may judge of the favorable impression he has made; for Lord Annandale has more than once recurred to what he terms the judicious observations of the chevalier.

Oh, why should vanity, the sole defect in his nature, thus render him the dupe of the vicious and designing! It was by this medium that I acquired an empire over him, and now, one still more unworthy, and still more capable of making the vilest use of it, seems likely to obtain a similar influence. And it is through me that he is brought in contact with this atrocious man! yet I dare not reveal his real character, nor terminate an acquaintance from which I predict some fatal result. Yes, I *will* watch over my husband, and endeavor, if possible, to preserve him from the pollution of this wretch's society. Let him wreak his worst vengeance on me, in preference to injuring this, the only being on earth who loves me.

When I reflect how encompassed I am by the snares of this dreadful man, I feel

as if in a dream; and when I hear my husband talk of him, in utter unconsciousness of his real character, I shudder, lest he should, by any fatality, ever be brought into hostile collision with such a monster.

I am continually placed in embarrassing situations with regard to money. No later than this day, Lord Annandale told me that he had put his name to a subscription for the relief of a very deserving family, reduced to poverty by the sudden death of a father who had held a clerkship in a public office too short a time to be entitled to a pension; and he recommended me to subscribe also.

"Shall I send your money with mine?" asked he.

The consciousness of not having a guinea at my command made me feel, and look too, so embarrassed, that he appeared surprised, and added—"Perhaps you disapprove of the system of subscribing; and, if so, I will not urge your compliance."

He must think me mean, illiberal, and uncharitable, not to have given the money; but it is better that he should entertain this opinion than to know that all the funds which his liberality bestowed on me have been expended to purchase the silence of a wretch; or know me for what I am—a degraded, lost woman—dependent for my position in society on the dearly-bought forbearance of the vilest and most detestable of his sex. I tremble at the thought of meeting this wretch on Thursday; but it will be still worse to have Lord Annandale exposed to his machinations. You shall hear the result of our interview.

Adieu! *Votre*

CAROLINE.

FROM LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

I REALLY begin to be alarmed, *ma chère* Caroline, at the audacious pertinacity with which De Carency pursues you. He has discovered your dread of him, and will make it a profitable source for levying contributions. I know not what to advise, unless it be that you induce milord to accompany you to Paris, where, should the vile wretch De Carency follow you, we could easily manage to have him thrown into prison. We have only to get some person to swear that he has been seen hovering near the Tuileries with an air-gun in the shape of a cane, or lurking on the route to Neuilly with a pistol in his pocket, and you will be troubled by him no more. Five louis, judiciously disposed of, will quicken the sight of as many persons of *le bas peuple* here, and enable them to see any thing their employers suggest.

Imaginez-vous mon malheur, ma chère amie—ma mère est morte. But that is not all: she has left the whole of her fortune to *la père* Maubois!

This is, indeed, a heavy blow; and *pauvre* Florestan and I are nearly overwhelmed by it. I have long expected that she would have bequeathed a considerable portion of her wealth to her Jesuitical confessor; but, that she would leave him all, never entered into my mind.

The only legacy I have received is a letter filled with reproaches for my extravagance and errors, and an exhortation to turn from my evil courses ere it be too late. My *liaison* with the *duc* she stigmatises as a crime of the deepest die, meriting opprobrium here, and perdition hereafter. In short, never was there such an epistle. It is, however, well calculated to preclude any very deep regret for the writer; though it prevents not my chagrin for the loss of my fortune. *Quelle mère dénaturée.*

Ma tante, avec cette douceur et cette amabilité qui la distinguent, appears more gratified than grieved by our cruel disappointment. She knows that we are now wholly in her power, and hers is not a nature to use that power generously. How right you were, *ma chère* Caroline, when you pronounced her to be *aussi méchante que bête!*

I must leave you, as *ma couturière* has come to take my orders for my mourning. How I hate black! for it makes me look so ill. I shall resume my letter when Victorine departs.

Only fancy what has occurred—never was there such a piece of meanness! *Madame ma tante* came into the room where I had left my unfinished letter to you, while I was giving my instructions to Victorine for my mourning, and had the want of decency to read what I had written. She was frantic with rage at the mention made of herself in it, and vows vengeance against me and you.

You, fortunately, are out of her reach; but on poor me it will fall heavily. It was very unthinking of me to leave the letter open upon my desk; but who could dream of her being guilty of so reprehensible an action as that of reading the letter of an-

other? and beneath her own roof, too! What a violation of the rights of hospitality and decorum!

She declares that she will reveal my *liaison* with the *duc* to Florestan. Little does she imagine that it has long been no secret to him: he, *pauvre cher homme*, was always reasonable, and adopted the philosophical system which takes for its motto, *vivre et laissez vivre*.

This ancient dame was positively transformed into a fury by the perusal of my letter. She looked a very Megara, with her bleared eyes, and withered cheeks flushed to crimson by the violence of her anger.

"*I, bête! I, méchante!*" exclaimed she; "what a vile calumny! and this, too, from you, base and ungrateful woman! who owe me so much—on whom I have lavished such generosity and kindness. Yes, your mother was right to disinherit you. She knew your wickedness, and has punished you in the only vulnerable point—your love of wealth. The example shall not be lost, depend upon it. The *méchante bête* shall find means to repay you for all your sins!"

Thus saying, she left the room, darting at me the most infuriated glances.

I have reflected long and deeply on the subject, and now pronounce, that all the evils in this life emanate from poverty. Were I in possession of the fortune to which I had a right, this old Tisiphone could not insult and humiliate me; Florestan would not be in a prison, and *I* should not be wretched—for wretched I am—at this moment. Should she expel me from her house, I know not where to go, unless to the Comtesse de Hauteforte's; and she, of late, has been so negligent in writing to me, and so altered in her manner, when I have called on her, that the alternative is far from being an agreeable one.

I will despatch *ma femme de chambre*, in whom I can confide, with a letter detailing my vexatious position to *le duc; he* will sympathise with me, for on his affection I can count—and this is indeed a consolation under present annoyances. I have seldom seen him of late, for my aunt, not content with prohibiting his visits at her hotel, has so strenuously insisted on my not meeting him elsewhere, that, to preserve peace in her *triste maison*, I have only rarely had an interview with him at Madame de Hauteforte's, who affected to be prudish about it. This conduct is *un peu ridicule, n'est-ce-pas?*—having so long known our attachment: and not a little ungrateful, considering that I have always thrown the shield of my friendship over her equivocal *liaison* with my husband. I was, also, much hurt by observing the indifference she has evinced with regard to Florestan's incarceration. She even permitted herself to make some ill-timed reflections on his extravagant habits, and incorrigible propensity to gaming; which came with a bad grace from her, who had profited so frequently and so largely by his profuse generosity. Since our change of fortune, I have discovered that people are much less cordial and friendly than formerly; and I begin to believe that the friendships formed in gay society are not endowed with much stability. Alas! why should we only acquire wisdom by misfortune? the severity of the school is not compensated by the value of the knowledge acquired in it.

A letter from *ma tante*—the most cruel, the most reproachful that ever was written. She orders me to leave her house; and adds, that a *méchante bête* can be no fit associate for a lady so *spirituelle* as I am. The truth of that unlucky phrase she cannot forgive; proving the correctness of the old proverb which says, that "it is only the truth that offends."

I know not what to do, nor where to go. Friends on whom, previously to our pecuniary embarrassments, I thought I might safely count, have all looked so coldly on me since that epoch, that my pride revolts from seeking their aid in this hour of need. The *duc* is, I know, of late, greatly straitened in his own finances; therefore, from him I can expect little more than sympathy and affection. There is no one to whom I can apply, except *la* Comtesse de Hautefort, who has received too many proofs of kindness from me, and of generosity from my husband, not to evince hospitality to me under my present distressing circumstances. How mortifying, how humiliating, to be reduced to so painful a dilemma!

Bless your stars, *chère* Caroline, that you are rich; for, to a proud spirit, there is no evil like poverty; nay, it includes all the others.

I have no money, for your generous loan I sent to poor Florestan; who, alas! in his imprudence, has squandered it all away in giving *recherché* dinners in St. Pelagie. *Mais après tout*, I cannot much blame the poor fellow; for there are so few ways of passing the time in that wretched place, that it is not either very surprising or very

reprehensible that he should have fallen into his folly, *pour s'amuser*.

Florestan was always so indulgent to my weaknesses, that it would be inexcusable of me not to extend a similar forbearance to his. Poor Florestan! You may laugh at me as much as you please, Caroline; ay, as much as in days of yore, when you used to say that our love resembled that of *une couple bourgeoise*, rather than the polite indifference of two persons of *la haute noblesse:* but I do still retain a sentiment of affection towards my husband, that might, had we never lived in the gay society of Paris, have formed the happiness of us both. *Mais, à quoi bon ces tristes reflexions?* And yet our position is well calculated to give rise to such—Florestan the inmate of a prison, where evil example corrupts and debases the mind; rendering vicious companionship and loose indulgences, which at first disgusted him, habitual: and I driven with insult from the shelter of his aunt's roof, to seek one beneath that of—his mistress!

To be sure my present abode never proved otherwise than disagreeable; still I would prefer it to that of Madame de Hauteforte's, whose coldness and *hauteur* of late have displeased me. Do you know, *ma chère*, that *malgré* all my boasted philosophy, I could sit down and weep at the painful embarrassments in which I find myself, but I am preserved from this unavailing weakness by the reflection that, were I to weep until I became a second Niobe, my position would not be ameliorated: *au contraire*, I should only spoil my eyes, which are one of the few advantages still left to me, and few people are disposed to serve ugly or *larmoyantes* women. Having lost my fortune, I must not also lose my good looks; and though I am your affectionate, must not become your ugly friend,

DELPHINE, MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

NEVER, *chère* Delphine, shall I forget what I have endured this evening, in the society of that miscreant De Carency!

He presented himself, dressed perfectly *à-la-mode;* and, strange to say, has resumed the air and tone of good company so completely, that, on listening to, and regarding him, I could scarcely imagine that he was the coarse and brutalised ruffian I beheld in the country. He approached me without the slightest symptom of embarrassment; delivered several amiable messages purporting to come from you; and referred to our ancient friendship in Italy, in a manner to induce the persons present to suppose that he must be one of my chosen friends.

How I felt my cheeks glow at his allusion to the most fatal event of my life—my acquaintance with this monster! But, instead of being diverted from the subject by my evident distress, he seemed to have a pleasure in exercising this species of torture over me, probably in revenge for the marked coldness of my manner towards him.

We had several people to dinner, to many of whom Lord Annandale presented him; and he acted the agreeable so effectually, that I saw, with secret horror, that he was establishing an acquaintance with them by the most assiduous attentions and animated conversation.

He sat next Lady Godalming—the fastidious and hypercritical Lady Godalming—and displayed so much tact in the judicious compliments rather implied than expressed to her, that I heard her offer him a ticket for Almack's, and invite him to her next *soirée*. Good heavens! could she but imagine the crimes of this man, how would she shrink from the possibility of meeting him!

During dinner, more than once I anxiously and stealthily observed the servants, to endeavor to infer from their looks whether, like my *femme de chambre*, they suspected, if they had not detected, the identity of the well-dressed man of fashion before them and the unsightly ruffian whose ferocity had filled them with fear and disgust: but, fortunately, they seemed to entertain no suspicions.

When cards were introduced in the evening, he made one of the whist-table of the Marquess of Haverfordwest, whose opinion he conciliated by approving his play, and referring, with a deferential air, to his judgment. He lost; and, when paying, displayed a case well stocked with notes to a large amount, the sight of which seemed to establish his claims to the consideration of not a few of those around him. Lord Haverfordwest immediately invited him to his house; and Lord Derbyshire, in his most insinuating tone, told him that he would get him elected an honorary member of the Travellers' Club, where, as he evidently liked a rubber of whist, he might find one every night.

"*Le Chevalier* is a very agreeable man," said Lord Haverfordwest to me; "but a very indifferent whist-player. I foresee that he will become popular in London; for he loses his money without, as is too often the case, losing his temper also; and pays his twenties and fifties with more *sang-froid* than other men exhibit in losing their guineas. Yes, he will be vastly popular, I foresee."

"What a very *distingué* personage your friend, le Chevalier de Carency, is," remarked Lady Godalming. "He is of the noble family De Carency, near Turin, is he not? How easy it is to see that he is one of *l'ancienne noblesse;* that *ton de bonne compagnie*, that air *comme il faut*, and, above all, the tact with which he insinuates, rather than pays, a compliment. Yes, these *agrémens* are only to be found in the descendants of the ancient *noblesse*."

So, here is the fastidious Lady Godalming caught by his flattery; and the supercilious Lord Haverfordwest, one of the most influential leaders of fashionable society, conciliated by this artful and designing man's affectation of being a bad whist-player, who loses his money freely, and can pay when he loses. Even so long ago as the period when he was at Florence, he had the reputation of being an adept at whist; consequently, I am persuaded his careless play was all a *ruse*, to deceive those around him.

He found means to approach me, during the evening, and murmured in my ear—

"Beware how you venture to display the *fierté* and coldness with which you have treated me this day; for I have the power, ay, and the inclination too, if you provoke me to it, to take ample vengeance on you."

While uttering this audacious threat, the shameless dissembler was smiling as gaily and as insinuatingly as though he were addressing to me the most elegant compliments. But, in spite of the indignation which his atrocious tyranny excited in me, I felt the dread influence he exercises over me; and that, though in a splendid home, and surrounded by the great and noble, I was only his puppet—the enslaved, debased concealer, if not the abettor, of the crimes of the foulest and most loathsome monster that ever disgraced mankind.

Every sound of his voice makes me tremble; every glance of his eye, like that of the basilisk, transfixes his victim. I know not how my agitation escaped general remark: but Lord Annandale alone spoke of it; and *he* attributed it to my recent indisposition. I thought the party would never have terminated; and, when at length they went away, a violent hysterical attack, with which I was seized, alarmed my dear and kind husband so much, that he sent for my physician, who prescribed quiet and repose—two blessings that are only for those free from guilt, and which never more will be mine on earth. Well might I have exclaimed, when the doctor was recommending restoratives, and gentle opiates—

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet, oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"

Little do those around me dream of the terrific thraldom in which I, the object of envy to so many, am placed. Yet there is one whose eye is often upon me, and with an expression of suspicious scrutiny beneath which mine never fails to drop. This vigilant observer is, I scarcely need add, Claudine. Her whole manner towards me is changed ever since De Carency's visit to Annandale Castle. There is a want of respect in it; yet a sort of pity, too, even more humiliating than her familiarity. I have her as little near me as possible, and she perceives that our separation is intentionally arranged by me; a slight which piques her into increased *brusquerie*. Oh, the misery, the degradation of being subjected to the insolence of our own menials! But what is this minor misery in comparison with the overwhelming ones that I must endure? Delphine, this state of things cannot long continue; I fell as if the principle of life was giving way beneath the fearful mental sufferings to which I am a prey, and as if reason were tottering on her throne.

Adieu, *chère* Delphine, I am too ill to add more than that I am always your affectionate friend,

CAROLINE.

THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE TO LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI.

I WRITE to you, *ma chère* Delphine, while Lord Annandale is at the House of Lords: I have given orders to be denied to all visiters, and find a relief in unburdening my over-charged breast to you.

But first let me express, though I can

only faintly do so, how deeply, how truly, I deplore the painful circumstances in which you and poor Florestan are placed. I must, however, do more than sympathise with you, *ma pauvre chère amie*. The five thousand pounds bequeathed me by the dear and wronged Augusta, shall be forthwith remitted to Paris, and placed at your disposal. If it be sufficient to extricate Florestan from prison, I shall rejoice; if not, it will, at all events, conduce to render his *séjour* in that melancholy abode less annoying, and leave you less dependent on his aunt. Do not wrong me, *chère* Delphine, by supposing that I could now smile, as in past times, at the affection of Florestan and yourself. Far from it; I would conjure you both to cultivate it to the utmost, convinced, as I now am, that happiness is to be found alone in domestic love—the only love that is free from sorrow or reproach.

A parcel has just been brought me, containing the most beautiful pair of diamond bracelets imaginable, a gift from Lord Annandale. How he overpowers me with generosity and tenderness, of which I know myself to be so unworthy! How strange and inscrutable is the human heart! If, when I formed my vile and wicked scheme of destroying the reputation of the pure, the sainted Augusta, in order to take her place, any one had told me that I ever should entertain the affection for Lord Annandale which I now feel, I should have smiled in derision at the seeming improbability. Yet I do love him —not, it is true, with the wild and enthusiastic passion of early youth, but with a tenderness and a gratitude which continued kindness could alone excite. This newborn sentiment adds to my misery, by making me tremble at the possibility of the loss of his—a misfortune inevitable, should he discover my crimes.

A letter from Paris, but the superscription is not in your hand, so I shall let it remain unopened for the present.

Hark! I hear some one coming; it must be—it is my dear, my kind husband.

* * * *

LA MARQUISE DE VILLEROI TO THE COUNTESS OF ANNANDALE.

Plaignez moi ma chère Caroline, car je suis la plus malheureuse de femmes. Deceived by him I trusted, by him for whom I incurred my mother's lasting displeasure and my own reproach. I am wretched, and I know not where to turn for consolation.

I told you in my last that I had written to the *duc*, to inform him of the disagreeable dilemma in which I am placed, and to state my intention of seeking an asylum at the Comtesse de Hauteforte's. When Lisette returned from his hotel, I perceived an expression of mingled anger and grief in her countenance that I fancied boded me no good; and when I tore open the letter, alas! my fears were but too well confirmed. His mode of addressing me was so constrained, so cold and ceremonious, that I had not perused three lines of his note before I felt convinced he no longer loved me. I questioned Lisette as to the cause of her changed aspect; dreading yet impatient to learn, if it had any reference to the *duc*, or if she could explain the cause of his estrangement. My reiterated commands to tell me *all* she knew, drew from her the confession that Francois, the *valet de chambre* of the *duc*, who had long since promised her marriage, had treated her with the utmost coldness and disdain. The poor creature wept bitterly while she related her lover's cruelty. He had told her that the *duc* had commanded her to break off his attachment to mademoiselle Lisette, and to transfer it to the *femme de chambre* of the lady, with whom he, the *duc*, is at present in love. Think, *chère* Caroline, what I felt at hearing this! The blood receded from my tortured heart, and rushed to my brain, which has ever since throbbed with agony.

"I told François, *madame la marquise*," resumed Lisette, "that if *monsieur le duc* was faithless, that was no excuse for *his* being so, and reminded him of all the promises he had made me; but, would *madame la marquise* believe it, the perfidious François said, that he must obey his master's orders; and added that he had only offered his vows to me because the *duc* commanded him, it being the general usage for the *valet de chambre* to form an attachment to the *femme de chambre* of the lady preferred by his master.

How was my pride and delicacy wounded by this speech of the weeping Lisette! I really felt ashamed to meet her eye.

"*Ah! madame la marquise*," sobbed she, *nous sommes bien à plaindre, car nous sommes toutes les deux trompées; vous, par le maître; et moi, par le valet. Ah! les hommes les hommes! ils sont tous de même et nous sommes toujours leurs dupes!* I endea-

vored, but alas! in vain, *madame*, to discover who the lady is to whom *monsieur le duc* is at present attached, in order that I might know who my rival is, but *ce perfide* Françoise refused to give me the slightest clue. *Ah! le villain homme, comme il m'a trompe!*"

Who can it be that has seduced the faithless *duc* from his allegiance? Yes, it is, it must be, the Duchesse de Harfleur. I now remember he used to praise her beauty; and I, fool that I was, joined in his admiration. Again I have perused his letter. He advises me to leave no means untried in order to effect a reconciliation with *ma tante*, and on no account to seek an asylum with the Comtesse de Hauteforte. He never liked her, or approved of my friendship for her; but what interest can he now have in where I go, or what becomes of me? Ah! I guess the motive for his advice. He knows that the Duchesse de Harfleur is on habits of intimacy with the Comtesse de Hauteforte; and dreads that, beneath her roof, I should become acquainted with his perfidy. I will instantly go to her, for she is now my sole refuge. *She*, at least, will pity if she cannot console me.

I am distracted, Caroline! My brain burns, and my heart throbs nearly to bursting. Never was there such deception, such baseness, as that to which I have been made the victim! But let me relate the particulars to you while I have strength to do so, for the combined effects of conflicting passions have rendered me so ill, that I am almost incapable of the exertion.

I left off writing to you to proceed to Madame de Hauteforte's—it maddens me to write her odious name. On arriving at her *porte cocher*, I saw the cabriolet of that false and heartless man, the *duc*, and instantly concluded that he had sought an interview with her, thus early, to urge her to go and advise me to conciliate *ma tante*. Her porter told my servant that *madame la comtesse* was not at home; on hearing which I assured him that his mistress would certainly receive *my* visit, although she excluded all others. He shook his head, looked incredulous, and I again repeated that the *comtesse* would be sure to receive me.

"I am very sorry to refuse *madame la marquise* the *entrée*," replied he, "*mais quoi faire? Madame la comtesse* has given strict orders that *no one* is to be admitted when *monsieur le duc* is with her, and there is no day in which I am not compelled to send away visiters, but the fault is not mine."

Such was my rage and indignation, that I felt capable at that moment, of committing any folly—nay, more, any crime. I longed to force my way to the presence of this perfidious pair, and to overwhelm them with my just reproaches; but, as I caught the glances of the porter, and my own servant, I was recalled to a sense of prudence, and determined on not exposing myself to their animadversions by any display of the jealousy and anger that was torturing me. I drove to St. Pelagie to see poor Florestan, and make him acquainted with the perfidy of both these wretches.

Had you seen him, Caroline, your heart, like mine, would have ached at the terrible change that has taken place in his appearance: and the still more terrible one in his habits and manners. When I had informed him of what I came to relate, he burst into a frantic laugh, and then, for the first time, I discovered that he was intoxicated. Yes, Caroline, even at two o'clock in the afternoon he was in a state that at once alarmed and disgusted me.

"And so, my poor Delphine, you have been duped as well as I!" exclaimed he, his utterance impeded by a hiccough; *mais soyez tranquille, chère amie, tu seras vengé, je t'en repond.*"

He lavished every possible term of reproach on the *duc* and *comtesse;* and revealed to me, that more than half his pecuniary embarrassments had been occasioned by the sums he had raised, at usurious interest, to extricate them from theirs. Yes, Caroline, I, who foolishly believed that the *duc* had, on more than one occasion, come forward to assist my poor Florestan, and felt grateful to him for it, have now ascertained that he, like the vile object of his present preference, has plunged him in ruin.

Yet, in the midst of intoxication, and its debasing effects, the good heart and kind disposition of my poor husband shone conspicuous. I could have wept over his degradation, forgetful of my own, in the interest and pity he excited.

"*Oui, ma pauvre Delphine,*" said he, "*cette méchante coquine étoit toujours jalouse de toi—toi, qui étoit si gentille, si bon enfant, qui ne m'a jamais cherché querelle. Elle étoit fachee, quand je te donnois le plus petit cadeau et avide d'en recevoir elle même; mais je l'arrangerai, soyez en sure; et lui aussi, le coquin?*"

I have taken a lodging close to St. Pelagie: that I may be near my poor Flores-

tan, the only friend I now have. I shall pass all my days with him during his incarceration, and endeavor to wean him from this dreadful habit of intoxication, which has been, I am convinced, induced by solitude and depression of spirits. Why have I so long left him a prey to their influence? I hear a noise—a cry and weeping; what can it be?

Madame la comtesse:—It has become my painful task to conclude the letter of my unfortunate niece. She is no more! having closed her errors by a crime that has plunged us all in terror and dismay. Yes, madame, a life of folly has been terminated by suicide. Her unhappy husband, my nephew, having fallen, mortally wounded, by the sword of her seducer, the wretched wife struck by horror and remorse, has destroyed herself by laudanum. How far your evil example and counsel may have tended to produce this fearful catastrophe, I leave your own conscience to determine. Do not stifle its whispers; but, ere it be too late, turn from your wickedness, and seek, by repentance, to make your peace with an offended God.

Your voluminous correspondence with my unfortunate niece I have looked over, sealed up, and addressed to Lord Vernon, the bereaved father, who owes to your vile machinations the stain cast on the honor of his innocent daughter, and, eventually that daughter's death. I was tempted to consign these proofs of your duplicity and wickedness to the husband you have duped, and whose name you dishonor; but, on reflection, I have refrained from so doing, to prove that I am not "*aussi méchante que bête*," as you pronounced me to be.

You, madam, have ever piqued yourself on your *ésprit*. Let me now ask you, what have been its results? Ruin, dishonor, and death, to all whose destiny you could influence, and to yourself,———But no, I leave your fate unpredicted; for it needs no sibyl's prescience to divine, that it must be as dark as your crimes.

ELEONORE, DUCHESSE DE CHATEAUNEUF.

FROM THE MARQUESS OF NOTTINGHAM TO EDWARD MORDAUNT, ESQ.

MY DEAR MORDAUNT:—Recalled to England by the dangerous illness of my sister, I find myself again in London, after more than a year's absence, with broken health, and spirits so depressed, as to render a sojourn in this gay metropolis most uncongenial to my feelings. Though the grief that drove me from my native land has been calmed by time and reason, enough of old regrets remain to unfit me from mingling with those from whom I can expect no sympathy, and whose presence awakens only painful recollections.

My first inquiries have been for Lord and Lady Vernon. They are, God be thanked! better than I dared to hope. The Delawards have devoted much of their time to console them; and they have succeeded in reconciling them to the decrees of Providence, the more easily from the conviction the excellent and bereaved parents feel, of being, ere long, reunited to her they have lost.

Lady Delaward is the mother of a daughter, whom she has named Augusta, and to whom Lord and Lady Vernon are fondly attached.

You have of course heard that Annandale is married to Miss Montressor. Does not this union explain the motive of the scheme against the honor and peace of the wronged and innocent being I deplore? a scheme in which, even from the commencement, I suspected Miss Montressor to be implicated. I shuddered on hearing of the unholy nuptials. Unhappy Annandale! how has he been duped! He,

> "Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away,
> Richer than all his tribe!"

My sister's malady has assumed a more favorable aspect, and her physicians think that the influence of a milder climate may restore her to health. I shall accompany her to Italy, and devote all my time and attention to this, the only tie that now binds me to life.

A most fearful piece of intelligence has this moment been communicated to me. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence! Annandale is no more. He has been murdered by the Chevalier de Carency—the seducer of the wife has been the assassin of the husband. Lord Calderwood has given me the particulars of this horrid affair, and has been with one or two friends of the family to Annandale House, and heard the depositions of the servants. The evidence of the *femme de chambre* of the wretched Lady Annandale proves, that having entertained suspicions disadvantageous to the Chevalier de Carency, she

had communicated them to the *valet de chambre;* and both agreed, when that wretch insisted on seeing their lady (though informed by the porter that she was not visible,) to remain in waiting in the anteroom, where they could overhear what occurred. The *valet* and *femme de chambre* state, that on *le chevalier's* entering the chamber, he reproached the countess, in terms of gross insolence, for having refused to receive him. Lady Annandale spoke in so low a tone of voice that they heard not her reply, but he menaced her loudly and violently. They distinctly heard him demand money from her; and, shortly after, exultingly exclaim, "It is well! these diamonds shall be mine." Lady Annandale appeared greatly agitated, entreated him not to take the diamonds, promising that, if he returned them to her, she would, on the next day, give him the money he required; but he refused to comply with her request. They heard the unhappy woman exclaim, "On my knees I entreat you—I implore you, restore to me the bracelets! my husband will expect to see them, and, if I cannot produce them, I shall be ruined."

At this moment they heard Lord Annandale ascend the stairs; and they only had time to retreat into another room when they heard him struggling with *le chevalier*, and the countess uttering frantic cries. They gave the alarm; the servants rushed into the room, and discovered their lord mortally wounded by a poniard, and his wretched wife senseless on the body of her murdered husband. The assassin was seized after a desperate resistance; and on his person was found a pair of diamond bracelets, which had that day been presented to Lady Annandale by her lord, as was proved by an unfinished letter open on her table.

The suit of apartments occupied by *le chevalier*, at a fashionable hotel, have been searched; and several valuable articles of jewellery, since recognised by the *femme de chambre* as having belonged to her mistress, as well as various other trinkets, were found, which, it is supposed, will lead to the discovery of other crimes.

The vile assassin is committed to prison, and an inquest is now being held on the body of the unfortunate Annandale. Tomorrow we shall hear the result. My nerves have been greatly shaken by this horrid catastrophe, which has excited general consternation in London. The wretched Lady Annandale has been delirious ever since the murder; and her health has lately been so much impaired, that her recovery is doubtful.

I send you the particulars of the evidence that transpired at the inquest.

The coroner's inquest has brought in a verdict of wilful murder against le Chevalier de Carency, who is committed to prison. The *femme de chambre* stated, on her examination, that she saw this man, for the first time, about a year and a quarter ago, in the village of Langley, near to which the countess was then residing with her aunt: that he at that period appeared in a state of the most abject poverty, and attracted her notice, as being a very suspicious-looking person. The next morning the aunt of the comtesse was found strangled in her bed—her escritoire and jewel-case rifled; and, though the doors and windows of the house were all found fastened on the inside, which precluded the belief that the murderer could have entered or left the house, she still had, more than once, associated the dreadful event with the apparition of the suspicious-looking man she had seen that day in the village. The steward of the murdered lady was tried for, and convicted of the murder, owing to a ring and bank-note belonging to her having been found in his possession.

About seven weeks ago, the prisoner came to Annandale Castle, disguised in a light-colored wig and large moustaches. He inquired for the *femme de chambre*, and gave her a letter for her lady, which he insisted on her delivering, in a very peremptory tone. She thought she recognised him; but the change in the color of his hair and moustaches made her doubtful.

Her mistress was exceedingly agitated on receiving the letter, and seemed greatly alarmed and apprehensive. That night she gave her a packet, which felt as if it contained bank-notes, to deliver to the prisoner when he called the next day; which order she fulfilled. Her lady never appeared the same since; but was always apprehensive and nervous. The servants, who saw the prisoner at Annandale Castle, remarked his bad countenance and suspicious looks.

Soon after the family came to London, Claudine Gauchet was in the boudoir of her ladyship, attaching some diamonds to the sleeves of a court dress, to be worn next day at the drawing-room, when the prisoner was announced. The comtesse became so agitated, on seeing him enter, that she let fall the *écrin* containing the jewels. The prisoner was dressed like a

grand seigneur, and had left off his light-colored wig, whiskers, and moustaches. The countess dismissed Claudine, though the latter could see that her ladyship dreaded an interview with the prisoner.

In an hour after she was summoned to her lady, whom she found much indisposed; and never since saw the diamonds, until she recognised some of them which were found in the prisoner's apartments. Her ladyship had told her that she had locked up the jewels, which statement Claudine did not credit. The servants, who had seen the prisoner at Annandale Castle, did not at first recollect him when he came to the town house; yet, notwithstanding the metamorphosis in his appearance, they now identified him. Claudine always thought her lady entertained for him a strong dislike, as well as dread.

When the prisoner dined with his lordship, a few days ago, Claudine observed that her lady seemed agitated and nervous; and, when the party broke up, her ladyship had an hysterical attack.

I add a few more particulars connected with the late terrible event. I have just learned, that among the valuable jewels discovered in the trunks of the Chevalier Carency, some have been identified as having belonged to the late Mrs. Wickenham, the aunt of the wretched Lady Annandale, who was robbed and murdered some fifteen months ago. Two portraits, from which the diamond setting had been broken, were found; and the *femme de chambre* of the deceased lady, who had been sent for, has recognised them, and other articles, as having been the property of her mistress, in whose possession she saw them only the day before her death. The prisoner is, therefore, now accused of the murder of Mrs. Wickenham; and, what is remarkable, has been identified by the landlord of the village alehouse where he stopped, who recognised him by the circumstance of his wanting the little finger on the left hand; to which fact one of his children drew the landlord's attention when the prisoner was eating his supper.

The culprit evinces the utmost obduracy, and refuses all explanation. Lady Annandale continues in an extremely dangerous state, without a single lucid interval since the death of her husband.

What a fearful monster is this De Carency! but he will soon meet the just punishment of his fiendish atrocities.

I have this moment heard that the guilty and unhappy Lady Annandale is no more. Wretched woman! fearful to others and to herself have been the effects of her guilt; for, even in the accomplishment of her schemes, she found only the remorse and misery that never fail, sooner or later, to await on crime.

Ever, my dear Mordaunt, sincerely yours,

NOTTINGHAM.

CONVERSATIONS

WITH

LORD BYRON.

CONVERSATIONS

WITH

LORD BYRON.

PREFACE.

The deep and general interest with which every detail connected with Lord Byron has been received by the public, induced the writer to publish her Conversations with him. She was for a long time undecided as to adopting this measure, fearful that, by the invidious, it might be considered as a breach of confidence; but as Boswell's and Mrs. Piozzi's disclosures, relative to Dr. Johnson, were never viewed in this light, and as Lord Byron never gave, or implied, the slightest injunction to secrecy, she hopes that she may equally escape such an imputation.

The many pages suppressed, filled with poems, epigrams, and sallies of Lord Byron, in which piquancy and wit are more evident than good-nature, bear testimony, that a wish to avoid wounding the feelings of the *living*, or to cast a darker shade over the reputation of the *dead*, has influenced the writer much more than the desire to make an amusing book; and she trusts, that in portraying Lord Byron, if she has proved herself an unskilful, she incurs not the censure of being considered an unfaithful, limner.

Genoa, April 1st, 1823.—Saw Lord Byron for the first time. The impression for the first few minutes disappointed me, as I had, both from the portraits and descriptions given, conceived a different idea of him. I had fancied him taller, with a more dignified and commanding air; and I looked in vain for the hero-looking sort of person with whom I had so long identified him in imagination. His appearance is, however, highly prepossessing; his head is finely shaped, and the forehead open, high, and noble; his eyes are gray and full of expression, but one is visibly larger than the other; the nose is large and well shaped, but from being a little *too thick*, it looks better in profile than in front-face: his mouth is the most remarkable feature in his face, the upper lip of Grecian shortness, and the corners descending; the lips full, and finely cut. In speaking, he shows his teeth very much, and they are white and even; but I observed that even in his smile—and he smiles frequently—there is something of a scornful expression in his mouth that is evidently natural, and not, as many suppose, affected. This particularly struck me. His chin is large and well shaped, and finishes well the oval of his face. He is extremely thin, indeed so much so that his figure has almost a boyish air; his face is peculiarly pale, but not the paleness of ill-health, as its character is that of fairness, the fairness of a dark-haired person—and his hair (which is getting rapidly gray) is of a very dark brown, and curls naturally: he uses a good deal of oil in it, which makes it look still darker. His countenance is full of expression, and changes with the subject of conversation; it gains on the beholder the more it is seen, and leaves an agreeable impression. I should say that melancholy was its prevailing character, as I observed that when any observation elicited a smile—and they were many, as the conversation was gay and playful—it appeared to linger but for a moment on his lip, which instantly resumed its former expression of seriousness. His whole appearance is remarkably gentlemanlike, and he owes nothing of this to his toilet, as his coat appears to have been many years made, is much too large—and all his gar-

ments convey the idea of having been purchased ready-made, so ill do they fit him. There is a *gaucherie* in his movements, which evidently proceeds from the perpetual consciousness of his lameness, that appears to haunt him; for he tries to conceal his foot when seated, and when walking, has a nervous rapidity in his manner. He is very slightly lame, and the deformity of his foot is so little remarkable that I am not now aware which foot it is. His voice and accent are peculiarly, agreeable, but effeminate—clear, harmonious, and so distinct, that though his general tone in speaking is rather low than high, not a word is lost. His manners are as unlike my preconceived notions of them as is his appearance. I had expected to find him a dignified, cold, reserved, and haughty person, resembling those mysterious personages he so loves to paint in his works, and with whom he has been so often identified by the good-natured world; but nothing can be more different; for were I to point out the prominent defect of Lord Byron, I should say it was flippancy, and a total want of that natural self-possession and dignity which ought to characterise a man of birth and education.

Albaro, the village in which the Casa Saluzzo, where he lives, is situated, is about a mile and a half distant from Genoa; it is a fine old palazzo, commanding an extensive view, and with spacious apartments, the front looking into a court-yard and the back into the garden. The room in which Lord Byron received us was large, and plainly furnished. A small portrait of his daughter Ada, with an engraved portrait of himself, taken from one of his works, struck my eye. Observing that I remarked that of his daughter, he took it down, and seemed much gratified when I discovered the strong resemblance it bore to him. Whilst holding it in his hand, he said, "I am told she is clever—I hope not; and above all, I hope she is not poetical: the price paid for such advantages, if advantages they be, is such as to make me pray that my child may escape them."

The conversation during our first interview was chiefly about our mutual English friends, some of whom he spoke of with kind interest. T. Moore, D. Kinnaird, and Mr. E. Ellice were among those whom he most distinguished. He expressed himself greatly annoyed by the number of travelling English who pestered him with visits, the greater part of whom he had never known, or was but slightly acquainted with, which obliged him to refuse receiving any but those he particularly wished to see: "But," added he, smiling, "they avenge themselves by attacking me in every sort of way, and there is no story too improbable for the craving appetites of our slander-loving countrymen."

Before taking leave, he proposed paying us a visit next day; and he handed me into the carriage with many flattering expressions of the pleasure our visit had procured him.

April 2d.—We had scarcely finished our *déjeuné à la fourchette* this day when Lord Byron was announced: he sent up two printed cards in an envelop addressed to us, and soon followed them. He appeared still more gay and cheerful than the day before—made various inquiries about all our mutual friends in England—spoke of them with affectionate interest, mixed with a badinage in which none of their little defects were spared; indeed candor obliges me to own that their defects seemed to have made a deeper impression on his mind than their good qualities (though he allowed all the latter,) by the *gusto* with which he entered into them.

He talked of our mutual friend Moore, and of his "Lalla Rookh," which he said though very beautiful, had disappointed him, adding, that Moore would go down to posterity by his Melodies, which were all perfect. He said that he had never been so much *affected* as on hearing Moore sing some of them, particularly "When I first met thee," which he said made him shed tears: "But," added he, with a look full of archness, "it was after I had drunk a certain portion of very potent white brandy." As he laid a peculiar stress on the word *affected*, I smiled, and the sequel of the white brandy made me smile again; he asked me the cause, and I answered that his observation reminded me of the story of a lady offering her condolence to a poor Irishwoman on the death of her child, who stated that she had never been more affected than on the event; the poor woman knowing the hollowness of the compliment, answered, with all the quickness of her country, "Sure, then, ma'am, that is saying a great deal, for you were always affected." Lord Byron laughed, and said my apropos was very wicked; but I maintained it was very just. He spoke much more warmly of Moore's social attractions as a companion, which he said were unrivalled, than of his merits as a poet.

He offered to be our cicerone in pointing out all the pretty drives and rides about Genoa; recommended riding as the only means of seeing the country, many of the fine points of view being inaccessible, except on horseback; and he praised Genoa on account of the rare advantage it possessed of having so few English, either as inhabitants or birds of passage.

I was this day again struck by the flippancy of his manner of talking of persons for whom I know he expresses, nay, for whom I believe he feels a regard. Something of this must have shown itself in my manner, for he laughingly observed that he was afraid he should lose my good opinion by his frankness; but that when the fit was on him he could not help saying what he thought, though he often repented it when too late.

He talked of Mr. ——, from whom he had received a visit the day before, praised his looks, and the insinuating gentleness of his manners, which, he observed, lent a peculiar charm to the little tales he repeated: he said that he had given him more London scandal than he heard since he left England; observed that he had quite talent enough to render his malice very *piquant* and amusing, and that his imitations were admirable. "How can his mother do without him?" said Byron; "with his *espièglerie* and malice, he must be an invaluable coadjutor; and Venus without Cupid could not be more *déluissée* than *Milady* —— without this her legitimate son."

He said that he had formerly felt very partial to Mr. ——; his face was so handsome, and his countenance so ingenuous, that it was impossible not to be prepossessed in his favor: added to which, one hoped that the son of such a father could never entirely degenerate: "he has, however, degenerated sadly," said Byron, "but as he is yet young, he may improve; though, to see a person of his age and *sex* so devoted to gossip and scandal is rather discouraging to those who are interested in his welfare."

He talked of Lord ——; praised his urbanity, his talents, and acquirements; but, above all, his sweetness of temper and good-nature. "Indeed I do love Lord ——," said Byron, "though the pity I feel for his domestic thraldom has something in it akin to contempt. Poor dear man! he is sadly bullied by *Milady;* and, what is worst of all, half her tyranny is used on the plea of kindness and taking care of his health. Hang such kindness! say I. She is certainly the most imperious, dictatorial person I know—is always *en reine;* which, by the by, in her peculiar position, shows tact, for she suspects that were she to quit the throne she might be driven to the antechamber; however, with all her faults, she is not vindictive—as a proof, she never extended her favor to me until after the little episode respecting her in 'English Bards;' nay more, I suspect I owe her friendship to it. Rogers persuaded me to suppress the passage in the other editions. After all, Lady —— has one merit, and a great one in my eyes, which is, that in this age of cant and humbug, and in a country—I mean our own dear England—where the cant of Virtue is the order of the day, she has contrived, without any great resemblance of it, merely by force of—shall I call it impudence or courage?—not only to get herself into society, but absolutely to give the law to her own circle. She passes, also, for being clever; this, perhaps owing to my dulness, I never discovered, except that she has a way, *en reine*, of asking questions that show some reading. The first dispute I ever had with Lady Byron, was caused by my urging her to visit Lady ——; and, what is odd enough," laughing with bitterness, "our first and last difference was caused by two very worthless women."

Observing that we appeared surprised at the extraordinary frankness, to call it by no harsher name, with which he talked of his *ci-devant* friends, he added:—"Don't think the worse of me for what I have said: the truth is, I have witnessed such gross selfishness and want of feeling in Lady —— that I cannot resist speaking my sentiments of her."—I observed: "But are you not afraid she will hear what you say of her?"—He answered:—"Were she to hear it she would act the *amiable*, as she always does to those who attack her; while to those who are attentive, and court her, she is insolent beyond bearing."

Having sat with us above two hours, and expressed his wishes that we might prolong our stay at Genoa, he promised to dine with us on the following Thursday, and took his leave, laughingly apologising for the length of his visit, adding, that he was such a recluse, and had lived so long out of the world, that he had quite forgotten the usages of it.

He on all occasions professes a detestation of what he calls *cant;* and says it will banish from England all that is pure and good; and that while people are look-

mittee and my friends in England seem both to approve of my going up into Greece; but I meet here with obstacles, which have hampered and put me out of spirits, and still keep me in a vexatious state of uncertainty. I began bathing the other day, but the water was still chilly, and in diving for a Genoese *lira* in clear but deep water, I imbibed so much water through my ears, as gave me a *megrim* in my head, which you will probably think a superfluous malady.

"Ever yours, obliged and truly,
"NOEL BYRON."

In all his conversations relative to Lady Byron, and they are frequent, he declares that he is totally unconscious of the cause of her leaving him, but suspects that the ill-natured interposition of Mrs. Charlemont led to it. It is a strange business! He declares that he left no means untried to effect a reconciliation, and always adds with bitterness, "A day will arrive when I shall be avenged. I feel that I shall not live long, and when the grave has closed over me, what must she feel!" All who wish well to Lady Byron must desire that she should not survive her husband, for the all-atoning grave, that gives oblivion to the errors of the dead, clothes those of the living in such sombre colors to their own too-late awakened feelings, as to render them wretched for life, and more than avenges the real or imagined wrongs of those we have lost for ever.

When Lord Byron was praising the mental and personal qualifications of Lady Byron, I asked him how all that he now said agreed with certain sarcasms supposed to bear a reference to her, in his works. He smiled, shook his head, and said they were meant to spite and vex her, when he was wounded and irritated at her refusing to receive or answer his letters; that he was not sincere in his implied censures, and that he was sorry he had written them; but notwithstanding this regret, and all his good resolutions to avoid similar sins, he might on renewed provocation recur to the same vengeance, though he allowed it was petty and unworthy of him. Lord Byron speaks of his sister, Mrs. Leigh, constantly, and always with strong expressions of affection; he says she is the most faultless person he ever knew, and that she was his only source of consolation in his troubles on the separation.

Byron is a great talker; his flippancy ceases in a *tête-à-tête*, and he becomes sententious, abandoning himself to the subject, and seeming to think aloud, though his language has the appearance of stiffness, and is quite opposed to the trifling chit-chat that he enters into when in general society. I attribute this to his having lived so much alone, as also to the desire he now professes of applying himself to prose writing. He affects a sort of Johnsonian tone, likes very much to be listened to, and seems to observe the effect he produces on his hearer. In mixed society his ambition is to appear the man of fashion; he adopts a light tone of badinage and persiflage that does not sit gracefully on him, but is always anxious to turn the subject to his own personal affairs, or feelings, which are either lamented with an air of melancholy, or dwelt on with playful ridicule, according to the humor he happens to be in.

A friend of ours, Colonel M——, having arrived at Genoa, spent much of his time with us. Lord Byron soon discovered this, and became shy, embarrassed in his manner, and out of humor. The first time I had an opportunity of speaking to him without witnesses was on the road to Nervi, on horseback, when he asked me if I had not observed a great change in him. I allowed that I had, and asked him the cause; and he told me, that knowing Colonel M—— to be a friend of Lady Byron's, and believing him to be an enemy of his, he expected that he would endeavor to influence us against him, and finally succeed in depriving him of our friendship; and that this was the cause of his altered manner. I endeavored, and at length succeeded, to convince him that Colonel M—— was too good and honorable a man to do any thing spiteful or ill-natured, and that he never spoke ill of him; which seemed to gratify him. He told me that Colonel M——'s sister was the intimate and confidential friend of Lady Byron, and that through this channel I might be of great use to him, if I would use my influence with Colonel M——, to make his sister write to Lady Byron for a copy of her portrait, which he had long been most anxious to possess. Colonel M——, after much entreaty, consented to write to his sister on the subject, but on the express condition that Lord Byron should specify on paper his exact wishes; and I wrote to Lord Byron to this effect, to which letter I received the following answer. I ought to add, that in conversation I told Lord Byron that it was reported that Lady Byron was in delicate health, and also that it was said she was

apprehensive that he intended to claim his daughter, or to interfere in her education: he refers to this in the letter which I copy.*

Talking of literary women, Lord Byron said that Madame de Staël was certainly the cleverest, though not the most agreeable woman he had ever known. "She declaimed to you instead of conversing with you," said he, "never pausing except to take breath; and if during that interval a rejoinder was put in, it was evident that she did not attend to it, as she resumed the thread of her discourse as though it had not been interrupted." This observation from Byron was amusing enough, as we had all made nearly the same observation on him, with the exception that he listened to, and noticed, any answer made to his reflections. "Madame de Staël," continued Byron, "was very eloquent when her imagination warmed, (and a very little excited it;) her powers of imagination were much stronger than her reasoning ones, perhaps owing to their being much more frequently exercised; her language was recondite, but redundant; and though always flowery, and often brilliant, there was an obscurity that left the impression that she did not perfectly understand what she endeavored to render intelligible to others. She was always losing herself in philosophical disquisition, and once she got entangled in the mazes of the labyrinth of metaphysics; she had no clue by which she could guide her path—the imagination that led her into her difficulties could not get her out of them; the want of a mathematical education, which might have served as a ballast to steady and help her into the port of reason, was always visible, and though she had great tact in concealing her defeat, and covering a retreat, a tolerable logician must have always discovered the scrapes she got into. Poor dear Madame de Staël! I shall never forget seeing her one day, at table with a large party, when the busk (I believe you ladies call it) of her corset forced its way through the top of the corset, and would not descend though pushed by all the force of both hands of the wearer, who became crimson from the operation. After fruitless efforts, she turned in despair to the valet de chambre behind her chair and requested him to draw it out, which could only be done by his passing his hand from behind over her shoulder, and across her chest, when, with a desperate effort, he unsheathed the busk. Had you seen the faces of some of the English ladies of the party, you would have been, like me, almost convulsed; while Madame remained perfectly unconscious that she had committed any solecism on *la décence Anglaise.* Poor Madame de Staël verified the truth of the lines—

> Qui de son sexe n'a pas l'esprit,
> De son sexe a tout le malheur.

She *thought* like a man, but, alas! she *felt* like a woman; as witness the episode in her life with Monsieur Rocca, which she dared not avow, (I mean her marriage with him,) because she was more jealous of her reputation as a writer than a woman, and the faiblesse de cœur, this alliance proved she had not courage to *affiche.* A friend of hers, and a compatriot into the bargain, whom she believed to be one of the most adoring of her worshippers, gave me the following epigrams:—

SUR LA GROSSESSE DE MADAME DE STAEL.

> Quel esprit! quel talent! quel sublime génie!
> En elle tout aspire à l'immortalite;
> Et jusqu'a son hydropisie,
> Rien n'est perdu pour la posterite.

PORTRAIT DE MADAME DE STAEL.

> Armande a pour esprit des momens de délire,
> Armande a pour vertu le mepris des appas:
> Elle craint le railleur que sans cesse elle inspire,
> Elle evite l'amant que ne la cherche pas:
> Puisqu'elle n'a point l'art de cacher son visage,
> Et qu'elle a la fureur de montrer son esprit,
> Il faut la defier de cesser d'être sage
> Et d'entendre ce qu'elle dit.

"The giving the epigrams to me, a brother of the craft of authors, was worthy of a friend, and was another proof, if proof were wanting, of the advantages of friends:

> No epigram such pointed satire lends
> As does the memory of our faithful friends.

I have an exalted opinion of friendship, as you see. You look incredulous, but you will not only give me credit for being sincere in this opinion, but one day arrive at the same conclusion yourself. 'Shake not thy *jetty* locks at me:' ten years hence, if we both live so long, you will allow that I am right, though you now think me a cynic for saying all this. Madame de Stael," continued Byron, "had peculiar satisfaction in impressing on her auditors the severity of the persecution she under-

* Here follow the letters in Moore's Journal, p. 644—6.

went from Napoleon: a certain mode of enraging her, was to appear to doubt the extent to which she wished it to be believed this had been pushed, as she looked on the persecution as a triumphant proof of her literary and political importance, which she more than insinuated Napoleon feared might subvert his government. This was a weakness, but a common one. One half of the clever people of the world believe they are hated and persecuted, and the other half imagine they are admired and beloved. Both are wrong, and both false conclusions are produced by vanity, though that vanity is the strongest which believes in the hatred and persecution, as it implies a belief of extraordinary superiority to account for it."

I could not suppress the smile that Byron's reflections excited, and, with his usual quickness, he instantly felt the application I had made of them to himself, for he blushed, and half angry, and half laughing, said:—"Oh! I see what you are smiling at; you think that I have described my own case, and proved myself guilty of vanity." I allowed that I thought so, as he had a thousand times repeated to me, that he was feared and detested in England, which I never would admit. He tried various arguments to prove to me that it was not vanity, but a knowledge of the fact, that made him believe himself detested: but I, continuing to smile, and look incredulous, he got really displeased, and said:—"You have such a provoking memory, that you compare notes of all one's different opinions, so that one is sure to get into a scrape." Byron observed, that he once told Madame de Staël that he considered her "Delphine" and "Corinne" as very dangerous productions to be put into the hands of young women. I asked him how she received this piece of candor, and he answered:—"Oh! just as all such candid avowals are received—she never forgave me for it. She endeavored to prove to me, that *au contraire*, the tendencies of both her novels were supereminently moral. I begged that we might not enter on 'Delphine,' as that was *hors du question*, (she was furious at this,) but that all the moral world thought, that her representing all the virtuous characters in 'Corinne' as being dull, common-place, and tedious, was a most insidious blow aimed at virtue, and calculated to throw it into the shade. She was so excited and impatient to attempt a refutation, that it was only by my volubility I could keep her silent. She interrupted me every moment by gesticulating, exclaiming—'*Quel idée!*' '*Mon Dieu!*' '*Ecoutez donc!*' '*Vous m'impatientez!*'—but I continued saying how dangerous it was to inculcate the belief that genius, talent, acquirements, and accomplishments, such as Corinne was represented to possess, could not preserve a woman from becoming a victim to an unrequited passion, and that reason, absence, and female pride were unavailing.

"I told her that 'Corinne' would be considered, if not cited, as an excuse for violent *passions*, by all young ladies with imaginations *exalté*, and that she had much to answer for. Had you seen her! I now wonder how I had courage to go on; but I was in one of my humors, and had heard of her commenting on me one day, so I determined to pay her off. She told me that I, above *all people*, was the last person that ought to talk of morals, as nobody had done more to deteriorate them. I looked innocent, and added, I was willing to plead guilty of having sometimes represented vice under alluring forms, but so it was generally in the world, therefore it was necessary to paint it so; but that I never represented virtue under the sombre and disgusting shapes of dulness, severity, and *ennui*, and that I always took care to represent the votaries of vice as unhappy themselves, and entailing unhappiness on those that loved them; so that *my moral* was unexceptionable. She was perfectly outrageous, and the more so, as I appeared calm and in earnest, though I assure you it required an effort, as I was ready to laugh outright at the idea that *I*, who was at thar period considered the most *mauvais sujét* of the day, should give Madame de Staël a lecture on morals; and I knew that this added to her rage. I also knew she never dared avow that *I* had taken such a liberty. She was, notwithstanding her little defects, a fine creature, with great talents, and many noble qualities, and had a simplicity quite extraordinary, which led her to believe every thing people told her, and consequently to be continually hoaxed, of which I saw such proofs in London. Madame de Staël it was who first lent me 'Adolphe,' which you like so much: it is very clever, and very affecting. A friend of hers told me, that she was supposed to be the heroine, and I, with my *aimable franchise*, insinuated as much to her, which rendered her furious. She proved to me how impossible it was that it could be so, which I already knew, and complained of the malice of the world for supposing it possible."

Byron has remarkable penetration in discovering the characters of those around him, and he piques himself extremely on it: he also thinks he has fathomed the recesses of his own mind; but he is mistaken: with much that is *little* (which he suspects) in his character, there is much that is *great*, that he does not give himself credit for: his first impulses are always good, but his temper, which is impatient, prevents his acting on the cool dictates of reason; and it appears to me, that in judging himself, Byron mistakes temper for character, and takes the ebullitions of the first for the indications of the nature of the second. He declares that, in addition to his other failings, avarice is now established.

This new vice, like all the others he attributes to himself, he talks of as one would name those of an acquaintance, in a sort of deprecating, yet half-mocking tone; as much as to say, you see I know all my faults better than you do, though I don't choose to correct them: indeed, it has often occurred to me, that he brings forward his defects, as if in anticipation of some one else exposing them, which he would not like; as, though he affects the contrary, he is jealous of being found fault with, and shows it in a thousand ways.

He affects to dislike hearing his works praised or referred to; I say affects, because I am sure the dislike is not real or natural; as he who loves praise, as Byron evidently does, in other things, cannot dislike it for that in which he must be conscious it is deserved. He refers to his feats in horsemanship, shooting at a mark, and swimming, in a way that proves he likes to be complimented on them; and nothing appears to give him more satisfaction than being considered a man of fashion, who had great success in fashionable society in London, when he resided there. He is peculiarly compassionate to the poor. I remarked that he rarely, in our rides, passed a mendicant without giving him charity, which was invariably bestowed with gentleness and kindness; this was still more observable if the person was deformed, as if he sympathised with the object.

Byron is very fond of gossiping, and of hearing what is going on in the London fashionable world: his friends keep him *au courant*, and any little scandal amuses him very much. I observed this to him one day, and added, that I thought his mind had been too great to descend to such trifles! He laughed, and said with mock gravity, "Don't you know that the trunk of an elephant, which can lift the most ponderous weights, disdains not to take up the most minute? This is the case with my *great* mind (laughing anew,) and you must allow the simile is worthy the subject. Jesting apart, I do like a little scandal—I believe all English people do. An Italian lady, Madame Benzoni, talking to me on the prevalence of this taste among my compatriots, observed, that when she first knew the English, she thought them the most spiteful and ill-natured people in the world, from hearing them constantly repeating evil of each other; but having seen various amiable traits in their characters, she had arrived at the conclusion, that they were not naturally *méchant;* but that living in a country like England, where severity of morals punishes so heavily any dereliction from propriety, each individual, to prove personal correctness, was compelled to attack the *sins* of his or her acquaintance, as it furnished an opportunity of expressing their abhorrence by words, instead of proving it by actions, which might cause some self-denial to themselves. This," said Byron, "was an ingenious, as well as charitable supposition; and we must all allow that it is infinitely more easy to decry and expose the sins of others than to correct our own; and many find the first so agreeable an occupation, that it precludes the second—this, at least, is my case."

"The Italians do not understand the English," said Byron; "indeed, how can they? for they (the Italians) are frank, simple, and open in their natures, following the bent of their inclinations, which they do not believe to be wicked; while the English to conceal the indulgence of theirs, daily practise hypocrisy, falsehood, and uncharitableness; so that to *one* error is added many crimes." Byron had now got on a favorite subject, and went on decrying hypocrisy and cant, mingling sarcasms and bitter observations on the false delicacy of the English. It is strange, but true as strange, that he could not, or at least did not, distinguish the distinction between cause and effect, in this case. The respect for virtue will always cause spurious imitations of it to be given, and what he calls hypocrisy is but the respect to public opinion that induces people, who have not courage to correct their errors, at least to endeavor to conceal them; and Cant is the homage that Vice pays to Vir-

tue.* We do not value the diamond less because there are so many worthless imitations of it, and Goodness loses nothing of her intrinsic value because so many wish to be thought to possess it. That nation may be considered to possess the most virtue where it is the most highly appreciated; and that the least, where it is so little understood, that the semblance is not even assumed.

About this period the Duke of Leeds and family arrived at Genoa, and passed a day or two there, at the same hotel where we were residing. Shortly after their departure, Byron came to dine with us, and expressed his mortification at the Duke's not having called on him, were it only out of respect to Mrs. Leigh, who was the half-sister of both. This seemed to annoy him so much, that I endeavored to point out the inutility of ceremony between people who could have no two ideas in common; and observed, that the *gêne* of finding oneself with people of totally different habits and feelings, was ill repaid by the respect their civility indicated. Byron is a person to be excessively bored by the constraint that any change of system would occasion, even for a day; yet his *amour propre* is wounded by any marks of incivility or want of respect he meets with. Poor Byron! he is still far from arriving at the philosophy that he aims at and thinks he has acquired, when the absence or presence of a person who is indifferent to him, whatever his station in life may be, can occupy his thoughts for a moment.

I have observed in Byron, a habit of attaching importance to trifles, and, *vice versâ*, turning serious events into ridicule; he is extremely superstitious, and seems offended with those who cannot, or will not, partake this weakness. He has frequently touched on this subject, and tauntingly observed to me, that I must believe myself wiser than him, because I was not superstitious. I answered, that the vividness of his imagination, which was proved by his works, furnished a sufficient excuse for his superstition, which was caused by an over-excitement of that faculty; but that *I*, not being blessed by the *camera lucida* of imagination, could have no excuse for the *camera oscura*, which I looked on superstition to be. This did not, however, content him, and I am sure he left me with a lower opinion of my faculties than before. To deprecate his anger, I observed that Nature was so wise and good that she gave compensations to all her offspring: that as to him she had given the brightest gift, genius; so to those whom she had not so distinguished, she gave the less brilliant, but perhaps as useful, gift of plain and unsophisticated reason. This did not satisfy his *amour propre*, and he left me, evidently displeased at my want of superstition. Byron is, I believe, sincere in his belief in supernatural appearances; he assumes a grave and mysterious air when he talks on the subject, which he is fond of doing, and has told me some extraordinary stories relative to Mr. Shelley, who, he assures me, had an implicit belief in ghosts. He also told me that Mr. Shelley's spectre had appeared to a lady, walking in a garden, and he seemed to lay great stress on this. Though some of the wisest of mankind, as witness Johnson, shared this weakness in common with Byron, still there is something so unusual in our matter-of-fact days in giving way to it, that I was at first doubtful that Byron was serious in his belief. He is also superstitious about days, and other trifling things, believes in lucky and unlucky days—dislikes undertaking any thing on a Friday, helping or being helped to salt at table, spilling salt or oil, letting bread fall, and breaking mirrors; in short, he gives way to a thousand fantastical notions, that prove that even *l'esprit le plus fort* has its weak side. Having declined riding with Byron one day, on the plea of going to visit some of the Genoese palaces and pictures, it furnished him with a subject of attack at our next interview; he declared that he never believed people serious in their admiration of pictures, statues, &c., and that those who expressed the most admiration were "Amatori senza Amore, and Conoscitori senza Cognizione." I replied, that as I had never talked to him of pictures, I hoped he would give me credit for being sincere in my admiration of them: but he was in no humor to give one credit for any thing on this occasion, as he felt that our giving a preference to seeing sights, when we might have passed the hours with him, was not flattering to his vanity. I should say that Byron was not either skilled in, or an admirer of, works of art; he confessed to me that very few had excited his attention, and that to admire these he had been forced to draw on his imagination. Of objects of taste or virtù he was equally regardless, and antiquities had no interest for him; nay, he carried this so far, that he disbelieved the

* Rochefoucault.

possibility of their exciting interest in any one, and said that they merely served as excuses for indulging the vanity and ostentation of those who had no other means of exciting attention. Music he liked, though he was no judge of it; he often dwelt on the power of association it possessed, and declared that the notes of a well-known air could transport him to distant scenes and events, presenting objects before him with a vividness that quite banished the present. Perfumes, he said, produced the same effect, though less forcibly, and, added he, with his mocking smile, often make me quite sentimental.

Byron is of a very suspicious nature; he dreads imposition on all points, declares that he foregoes many things, from the fear of being cheated in the purchase, and is afraid to give way to the natural impulses of his character, lest he should be duped or mocked. This does not interfere with his charities, which are frequent and liberal; but he has got into a habit of calculating even his most trifling personal expenses, that is often ludicrous, and would in England expose him to ridicule. He indulges in a self-complacency when talking of his own defects, that is amusing; and he is rather fond than reluctant of bringing them into observation. He says that money is wisdom, knowledge, and power, all combined, and that this conviction is the only one he has in common with all his countrymen. He dwells with great asperity on an acquaintance to whom he lent some money, and who has not repaid him.

Byron seems to take particular pleasure in ridiculing sentiment and romantic feelings; and yet the day after will betray both, to an extent that appears impossible to be sincere, to those who had heard his previous sarcasms: that he is sincere, is evident, as his eyes fill with tears, his voice becomes tremulous, and his whole manner evinces that he feels what he says. All this appears so inconsistent, that it destroys sympathy, or if it does not quite do that, it makes one angry with oneself for giving way to it for one who is never two days of the same way of thinking, or at least expressing himself. He talks for effect, likes to excite astonishment, and certainly destroys in the mind of his auditors all confidence in his stability of character. This must, I am certain, be felt by all who have lived much in his society; and the impression is not satisfactory.

Talking one day of his domestic misfortunes, as he always called his separation from Lady Byron, he dwelt in a sort of unmanly strain of lamentation on it, that all present felt to be unworthy of him; and, as the evening before, I had heard this habitude of his commented on by persons indifferent about his feelings, who even ridiculed his making it a topic of conversation with mere acquaintances, I wrote a few lines in verse, expressive of my sentiments, and handed it across the table round which we were seated, as he was sitting for his portrait. He read them, became red and pale by turns, with anger, and threw them down on the table, with an expression of countenance that is not to be forgotten. The following are the lines, which had nothing to offend, but they did offend him deeply, and he did not recover his temper during the rest of his stay.

And canst thou bare thy breast to vulgar eyes?
  And canst thou show the wounds that rankle there?
Methought in noble hearts that sorrow lies
  Too deep to suffer coarser minds to share.

The wounds inflicted by the hand we love,
  (The hand that should have warded off each blow,)
Are never heal'd, as aching hearts can prove,
  But *sacred* should the stream of sorrow flow.

If *friendship's* pity quells not real grief,
  Can *public* pity soothe thy woes to sleep?—
No! Byron, spurn such vain, such weak relief,
  And if thy tears must fall—in secret weep.

He never appeared to so little advantage as when he talked sentiment: this did not at all strike me at first; on the contrary, it excited a powerful interest for him; but when he had vented his spleen, in sarcasms, and pointed ridicule on sentiment, reducing all that is noblest in our natures to the level of common every-day life, the charm was broken, and it was impossible to sympathise with him again. He observed something of this, and seemed dissatisfied and restless when he perceived that he could no longer excite either strong sympathy or astonishment. Notwithstanding all these contradictions in this wayward, spoiled child of genius, the impression left on my mind was, that he had both sentiment and romance in his nature; but that, from the love of displaying his wit and astonishing his hearers, he affected to despise and ridicule them.

From this period we saw Lord Byron frequently; he met us in our rides nearly every day, and the road to Nervi became our favorite promenade. While riding by the sea-shore, he often recurred to the events of his life, mingling sarcasms on himself with bitter pleasantries against others. He dined often with us and some-

times came after dinner, as he complained that he suffered from indulging at our repasts, as animal food disagreed with him. He added, that even the excitement of society, though agreeable and exhilarating at the time, left a nervous irritation, that prevented sleep or occupation for many hours afterwards.

I once spoke to him, by the desire of his medical adviser, on the necessity of his accustoming himself to a more nutritious regimen; but he declared, that if he did, he should get fat and stupid, and that it was only by abstinence that he felt he had the power of exercising his mind. He complained of being spoiled for society, by having so long lived out of it; and said, that though naturally of a quick apprehension, he latterly felt himself dull and stupid. The impression left on my mind is, that Byron never could have been a brilliant person in society, and that he was not formed for what generally is understood by that term: he has none of the "small change" that passes current in the mart of society; his gold is in ingots, and cannot be brought into use for trifling expenditures; he, however, talks a good deal, and likes to *raconter*.

Talking of people who were great talkers, he observed that almost all clever people were such, and gave several examples: amongst others, he cited Voltaire, Horace Walpole, Johnson, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Madame de Staël. "But," said he, "my friend, Lady ———, would have talked them all out of the field. She, I suppose, has heard that all clever people are great talkers, and so has determined on displaying, at least, *one* attribute of that genus; but her ladyship would do well to recollect that *all* great talkers are not clever people—a truism that no one can doubt who has been often in her society."

"Lady ———," continued Byron, "with *beaucoup de ridicule*, has many essentially fine qualities; she is independent in her principles—though, by the by, like all Independents, she allows that privilege to few others, being the veriest tyrant that ever governed Fashion's fools, who are compelled to shake their caps and bells as she wills it. Of all that coterie," said Byron, "Madame de ———, after Lady ———, was the best; at least I thought so, for these two ladies were the only ones who ventured to protect me when all London was crying out against me on the separation, and *they* behaved courageously and kindly; indeed Madame de ——— defended me when few dared to do so, and I have always remembered it. Poor dear Lady ———! does she still retain her beautiful cream-colored complexion and raven hair? I used to long to tell her that she spoiled her looks by her excessive animation; for eyes, tongue, head, and arms were all in movement at once, and were only relieved from their active service by want of respiration. I shall never forget when she once complained to me of the fatigue of literary occupations; and I, in terror, expected her ladyship to propose reading to me an epic poem, tragedy, or at least a novel of her composition, when lo! she displayed to me a very richly-bound album, half filled with printed extracts cut out of newspapers and magazines, which she had selected and pasted in the book; and I (happy at being let off so easily) sincerely agreed with her that literature was very tiresome. I understand that she has now advanced with the 'march of intellect,' and got an album filled with MS. poetry, to which all of us, of the *craft*, have contributed. I was the first; Moore wrote something, which was, like all that he writes, very sparkling and terse; but he got dissatisfied with the faint praise it met with from the husband before Miladi saw the verses, and destroyed the effusion: I know not if he ever has supplied their place. Can you fancy Moore paying attention to the opinion of Milor on poesy? Had it been on racing or horse-flesh he might have been right; but Pegasus is, perhaps, the only horse of whose paces Lord ——— could not be a judge."

Talking of fashionable life in London, Lord Byron said that there was nothing so vapid and *ennuyeux*. "The English," said he, "were intended by nature to be good, sober-minded people, and those who live in the country are really admirable. I saw a good deal of English country life, and it is the only favorable impression that remains of our mode of living; but of London, and *exclusive* society, I retain a fearful recollection. Dissipation has need of wit, talent, and gaiety to prevent reflection, and make the eternal round of frivolous amusements pass; and of these," continued Byron, "there was a terrible lack in the society in which I mixed. The minds of the English are formed of sterner stuff. You may make an English woman (indeed Nature does this) the best daughter, wife, and mother in the world; nay, you may make her a heroine; but nothing can make her a genuine *woman of fashion!* And yet this latter *rôle* is the one which, *par preference*, she always wishes to act. Thorough-bred English gentlewomen,"

said Byron, "are the most distinguished and lady-like creatures imaginable. Natural, mild, and dignified, they are formed to be placed at the heads of our patrician establishments; but when they quit their congenial spheres to enact the leaders of fashion, *les dames à la mode*, they bungle sadly; their gaiety degenerates into levity—their hauteur into incivility—their fashionable ease and nonchalance into *brusquerie*—and their attempts at assuming *les usages du monde* into a positive outrage on all the *bienséances*. In short, they offer a coarse caricature of the airy flightiness and capricious, but amusing, *légèreté* of the French, without any of their redeeming *espièglerie* and *politesse*. And all this because they will perform parts in the comedy of life for which nature has not formed them, neglecting their own dignified characters."

"Madame de Staël," continued Lord Byron, "was forcibly struck by the factitious tone of the best society in London, and wished very much to have an opportunity of judging of that of the second class. She, however, had not this opportunity, which I regret, as I think it would have justified her expectations. In England, the raw material is generally good; it is the over-dressing that injures it; and as the class she wished to study, are well educated, and have all the refinement of civilisation without its corruption, she would have carried away a favorable impression. Lord Grey and his family were the personification of her *beau idéal* of perfection, as I must say they are of mine," continued Byron, "and might serve as the finest specimens of the pure English patrician breed, of which so few remain. *His* uncompromising and uncompromised dignity, founded on self-respect, and accompanied by that certain proof of superiority —simplicity of manner and freedom from affectation, with *her* mild and matron graces, her whole life offering a model to wives and mothers—really they are people to be proud of, and a few such would reconcile one to one's species."

One of our first rides with Lord Byron was to Nervi, a village on the sea-coast, most romantically situated, and each turn of the road presenting various and beautiful prospects. They were all familiar to him, and he failed not to point them out, but in very sober terms, never allowing any thing like enthusiasm in his expressions, though many of the views might have excited it.

His appearance on horseback was not advantageous, and he seemed aware of it, for he made many excuses for his dress and equestrian appointments. His horse was literally covered with various trappings, in the way of cavesons, martingales, and Heaven knows how many other (to me) unknown inventions. The saddle was *à la hussarde* with holsters, in which he always carried pistols. His dress consisted of a nankeen jacket and trousers, which appeared to have shrunk from washing; the jacket embroidered in the same color, and with three rows of buttons; the waist very short, the back very narrow, and the sleeves set in as they used to be ten or fifteen years before; a black stock, very narrow; a dark-blue velvet cap with a shade, and a very rich gold band and large gold tassel at the crown; nankeen gaiters, and a pair of blue spectacles, completed his costume, which was any thing but becoming. This was his general dress of a morning for riding, but I have seen it changed for a green tartan plaid jacket. He did not ride well, which surprised us, as, from the frequent allusions to horsemanship in his works, we expected to find him almost a Nimrod. It was evident that he had *pretensions* on this point, though he certainly was what I should call a timid rider. When his horse made a false step, which was not unfrequent, he seemed discomposed; and when we came to any bad part of the road, he immediately checked his course and walked his horse very slowly, though there really was nothing to make even a lady nervous. Finding that I could perfectly manage (or what he called *bully*) a very highly-dressed horse that I daily rode, he became extremely anxious to buy it; asked me a thousand questions as to how I had acquired such a perfect command of it, &c. &c. and entreated, as the greatest favor, that I would resign it to him as a charger to take to Greece, declaring he never would part with it, &c. As I was by no means a bold rider, we were rather amused at observing Lord Byron's opinion of my courage; and as he seemed so anxious for the horse, I agreed to let him have it when he was to embark. From this time he paid particular attention to the movements of poor Mameluke (the name of the horse,) and said he should now feel confidence in action with so steady a charger.

During our ride the conversation turned on our mutual friends and acquaintances in England. Talking of two of them, for one of whom he professed a great regard, he declared laughingly that they had saved

him from suicide. Seeing me look grave, he added, "It is a fact, I assure you: I should positively have destroyed myself, but I guessed that ——— or ——— would write my life, and with this fear before my eyes, I have lived on. I know so well the sort of things they would write of me—the excuses, lame as myself, that they would offer for my delinquencies, while they were unnecessarily exposing them, and all this done with the avowed intention of justifying, what, God help me! cannot be justified, my *unpoetical* reputation, with which the world can have nothing to do! One of my friends would dip his pen in clarified honey, and the other in vinegar, to describe my manifold transgressions, and as I do not wish my poor fame to be either *preserved* or *pickled*, I have lived on and written my Memoirs, where facts will speak for themselves, without the editorial candor of excuses, such as 'we cannot excuse *this* unhappy error, or defend *that* impropriety!'—the mode," continued Byron, "in which friends exalt their own prudence and virtue, by exhibiting the want of those qualities in the dear departed, and by marking their disapproval of his errors. I have written my Memoirs," said Byron, "to save the necessity of their being written by a friend or friends, and have only to hope they will not add notes."

I remarked, with a smile, that at all events he anticipated his friends by *saying* beforehand as many ill-natured things of *them* as they could possibly *write* of *him*. He laughed, and said, "Depend on it we are equal. Poets (and I may, I suppose, without presumption, count myself among that favored race, as it has pleased the Fates to make me one,) have no friends. On the old principle that 'union gives force,' we sometimes agree to have a violent friendship for each other. We dedicate, we bepraise, we write pretty letters, but we do not deceive *each other*. In short, we resemble you fair ladies, when some half dozen of the fairest of you profess to love each other mightily, correspond so sweetly, call each other by such pretty epithets, and laugh in your hearts at those who are taken in by such appearances."

I endeavored to defend my sex, but he adhered to his opinion. I ought to add that during this conversation he was very gay, and that though his words may appear severe, there was no severity in his manner. The natural flippancy of Lord Byron took off all appearance of premeditation or bitterness from his remarks, even when they were acrimonious, and the impression conveyed to, and left on my mind was, that for the most part they were uttered more in jest than in earnest. They were however sufficiently severe to make me feel that there was no safety with him, and that in five minutes after one's quitting him on terms of friendship, he could not resist the temptation of showing one up, either in conversation or by letter, though in half an hour after he would put himself to personal inconvenience to render a kindness to the person so shown up.

I remarked, that in talking of literary productions, he seemed much more susceptible to their defects, than alive to their beauties. As a proof, he never failed to remember some quotation that told against the unhappy author, which he recited with an emphasis, or a mock-heroic air, that made it very ludicrous. The pathetic he always burlesqued in reciting; but this I am sure proceeded from an affectation of not sympathising with the general taste.

April —. Lord Byron dined with us to-day. During dinner he was as usual gay, spoke in terms of the warmest commendation of Sir Walter Scott, not only as an author, but as a man, and dwelt with apparent delight on his novels, declaring that he had read and re-read them over and over again, and always with increased pleasure. He said that he quite equalled, nay, in his own opinion surpassed Cervantes. In talking of Sir Walter's private character, goodness of heart, &c., Lord Byron became more animated than I had ever seen him; his color changed from its general pallid tint to a more lively hue, and his eyes became humid; never had he appeared to such advantage, and it might easily be seen that every expression he uttered proceeded from his heart. Poor Byron!—for poor he is even with all his genius, rank and wealth—had he lived more with men like Scott, whose openness of character and steady principle had convinced him that they were in earnest in *their goodness*, and not *making believe*, (as he always suspects good people to be,) his life might be different and happier.

Byron is so acute an observer that nothing escapes him; all the shades of selfishness and vanity are exposed to his searching glance, and the misfortune is, (and a serious one it is to him,) that when he finds these, and alas! they are to be found on every side, they disgust and prevent his giving credit to the many good qualities that often accompany them. He declares he can sooner pardon crimes, because they proceed from the passions, than those mi-

nor vices, that spring from selfishness and self-conceit. We had a long argument this evening on this subject, which ended, like most arguments, by leaving both of the same opinion as when it commenced. I endeavored to prove that crimes were not only injurious to the perpetrators, but often ruinous to the innocent, and productive of misery to friends and relations, whereas selfishness and vanity carried with them their own punishment, the first depriving the person of all sympathy, and the second exposing him to ridicule, which to the vain is a heavy punishment, but that their effects were not destructive to society as are crimes.

He laughed when I told him that having heard him so often declaim against vanity, and detect it so often in his friends, I began to suspect he knew the malady by having had it himself, and that I had observed through life, that those persons who had the most vanity were the most severe against that failing in their friends. He wished to impress upon me that he was not vain, and gave various proofs to establish this; but I produced against him his boasts of swimming, his evident desire of being considered more *un homme de société* than a poet, and other little examples, when he laughingly pleaded guilty, and promised to be more merciful towards his friends.

We sat on the balcony after tea: it commands a fine view, and we had one of those moonlight nights that are seen only in this country. Every object was tinged with its silvery lustre. In front were crowded an uncountable number of ships from every country, with their various flags waving in the breeze, which bore to us the sounds of the as various languages of the crews. In the distance we enjoyed a more expanded view of the sea, which reminded Byron of his friend Moore's description, which he quoted:

The sea is like a silv'ry lake.

The fanale casting its golden blaze into this silvery lake, and throwing a red lurid reflection on the sails of the vessels that passed near it: the fishermen, with their small boats, each having a fire held in a sort of grate fastened at the end of the boat, which burns brilliantly, and by which they not only see the fish that approach, but attract them; their scarlet caps, which all the Genoese sailors and fishermen wear, adding much to their picturesque appearance, all formed a picture that description falls far short of; and when to this are joined the bland odors of the richest and rarest flowers, with which the balconies are filled, one feels that such nights are never to be forgotten, and while the senses dwell on each, and all, a delicious melancholy steals over the mind, as it reflects that, the destinies of each conducting to far distant regions, a time will arrive when all now before the eye will appear but as a dream.

This was felt by all the party; and after a silence of many minutes, it was broken by Byron, who remarked, "What an evening, and what a view! Should we ever meet in the dense atmosphere of London, shall we not recall this evening, and the scenery now before us? but no! most probably *there* we should not feel as we do here; we should fall into the same heartless, loveless apathy that distinguishes one half of our dear compatriots, or the bustling, impertinent importance to be considered *supreme bon ton* that marks the other."

Byron spoke with bitterness, but it was the bitterness of a fine nature soured by having been touched too closely by those who had lost their better feelings through a contact with the world. After a few minutes' silence, he said, "Look at that forest of masts now before us! from what remote parts of the world do they come! o'er how many waves have they not passed, and how many tempests have they not been, and may again be exposed to! how many hearts and tender thoughts follow them! mothers, wives, sisters, and sweethearts, who perhaps at this hour are offering up prayers for their safety."

While he was yet speaking, sounds of vocal music arose; national hymns and barcaroles were sung in turns by the different crews, and when they had ceased, "God save the King" was sung by the crews of some English merchantmen lying close to the pier. This was a surprise to us all, and its effect on our feelings was magnetic. Byron was no less touched than the rest; each felt at the moment that tie of country which unites all when they meet on a far distant shore. When the song ceased Byron, with a melancholy smile, observed, "Why, positively, we are all quite sentimental this evening, and *I—I* who have sworn against sentimentality, find the old leaven still in my nature, and quite ready to make a fool of me. 'Tell it not in Gath,' that is to say, breathe it not in London, or to English ears polite, or never again shall I be able

to *enact* the stoic philosopher. Come, come, this will never do, we must forswear moonlight, fine views, and above all, hearing a national air sung. Little does his gracious Majesty Big Ben, as Moore calls him, imagine what loyal subjects he has at Genoa, and least of all that I am among their number."

Byron attempted to be gay, but the effort was not successful, and he wished us good night with a trepidation of manner that marked his feelings. And this is the man that I have heard considered unfeeling! How often are our best qualities turned against us, and made the instruments for wounding us in the most vulnerable part, until, ashamed of betraying our susceptibility, we affect an insensibility we are far from possessing, and, while we deceive others, nourish in secret the feelings that prey *only* on our own hearts!

It is difficult to judge when Lord Byron is serious or not. He has a habit of mystifying, that might impose upon many; but that can be detected by examining his physiognomy; for a sort of mock gravity, now and then broken by a malicious smile, betrays when he is speaking for effect, and not giving utterance to his real sentiments. If he sees that he is detected, he appears angry for a moment, and then laughingly admits that it amuses him to *hoax* people; as he calls it, and that when each person, at some future day, will give their different statements of him, they will be so contradictory, that *all* will be doubted—an idea that gratifies him exceedingly! The mobility of his nature is extraordinary, and makes him inconsistent in his actions as well as in his conversation. He introduced the subject of La Contessa Guiccioli and her family, which we, of course, would not have touched on. He stated that they lived beneath his roof because his rank as a British peer afforded her father and brother protection, they having been banished from Ravenna, their native place, on account of their politics. He spoke in high terms of the Counts Gamba, father and son; he said that he had given the family a wing of his house, but that their establishments were totally separate, their repasts never taken together, and that such was their scrupulous delicacy, that they never would accept a pecuniary obligation from him in all the difficulties entailed on them by their exile. He represented La Contessa Guiccioli as a most amiable and lady-like person, perfectly disinterested and noble-minded, devotedly attached to him, and possessing so many high and estimable qualities, as to offer an excuse for any man's attachment to her. He said that he had been passionately in love with her, and that she had sacrificed every thing for him; that the whole of her conduct towards him had been admirable, and that not only did he feel the strongest personal attachment to her, but the highest sentiments of esteem. He dwelt with evident complacency on her noble birth and distinguished connections—advantages to which he attaches great importance. I never met any one with so decided a taste for aristocracy as Lord Byron, and this is shown in a thousand different ways.

He says the Contessa is well educated, remarkably fond of, and well read in, the poetry of her own country, and a tolerable proficient in that of France and England. In his praises of Madame Guiccioli, it is quite evident that he is sincere, and I am persuaded this is his last attachment. He told me that she had used every effort to get him to discontinue "Don Juan," or at least to preserve the future cantos from all impure passages. In short, he has said all that was possible to impress me with a favorable opinion of this lady, and has convinced me that he entertains a very high one of her himself.

Byron is a strange *mélange* of good and evil, the predominancy of either depending wholly on the humor he may happen to be in. His is a character that Nature totally unfitted for domestic habits, or for rendering a woman of refinement or susceptibility happy. He confesses to me that he is not happy, but admits that it is his own fault, as the Contessa Guiccioli, the only object of his love, has all the qualities to render a reasonable being happy. I observed, *apropos* to some observation he had made, that I feared La Contessa Guiccioli had little reason to be satisfied with her lot. He answered, "Perhaps you are right; yet she must know that I am sincerely attached to her; but the truth is, my habits are not those requisite to form the happiness of any woman: I am worn out in feelings; for, though only thirty-six, I feel sixty in mind, and am less capable than ever of those nameless attentions that all women, but, above all, Italian women, require. I like solitude, which has become absolutely necessary to me; am fond of shutting myself up for hours, and, when with the person I like, am often *distrait* and gloomy. There is something I am convinced (continued Byron) in the poetical temperament that precludes hap-

piness, not only to the person who has it, but to those connected with him. Do not accuse me of vanity, because I say this, as my belief is, that the worst poet may share this misfortune in common with the best. The way in which I account for it is, that our *imaginations* being warmer than our *hearts*, and much more given to wander, the latter have not the power to control the former: hence, soon after our passions are gratified, imagination again takes wing, and, finding the insufficiency of actual indulgence beyond the moment, abandons itself to all its wayward fancies, and during this abandonment becomes cold and insensible to the demands of affection. This is our misfortune, but not our fault, and dearly do we expiate it; by it we are rendered incapable of sympathy, and cannot lighten, by sharing, the pain we inflict. Thus we witness, without the power of alleviating, the anxiety and dissatisfaction our conduct occasions. We are not so totally unfeeling as not to be grieved at the unhappiness we cause; but this same power of imagination transports our thoughts to other scenes, and we are always so much more occupied by the ideal than the present, that we forget all that is actual. It is as though the creatures of another sphere, not subject to the lot of mortality, formed a factitious alliance (as all alliances must be that are not in all respects equal) with the creatures of this earth, and, being exempt from its sufferings, turned their thoughts to brighter regions, leaving the partners of their earthly existence to suffer alone. But, let the object of affection be snatched away by death, and how is all the pain ever inflicted on them avenged! The same imagination that led us to slight, or overlook their sufferings, now that they are for ever lost to us, magnifies their estimable qualities, and increases tenfold the affection we ever felt for them—

> Oh! what are thousand living loves,
> To that which cannot quit the dead?

How did I feel this, when Allegra, my daughter, died! While she lived, her existence never seemed necessary to my happiness; but no sooner did I lose her, than it appeared to me as if I could not live without her. Even now the recollection is most bitter; but how much more severely would the death of Teresa afflict me with the dreadful consciousness that while I had been soaring into the fields of romance and fancy, I had left her to weep over my coldness or infidelities of imagination. It is a dreadful proof of the weakness of our natures, that we cannot control ourselves sufficiently to form the happiness of those we love, or to bear their loss without agony."

The whole of this conversation made a deep impression on my mind, and the countenance of the speaker, full of earnestness and feeling, impressed it still more strongly on my memory. Byron is right; a brilliant imagination is rarely, if ever, accompanied by a warm heart; but on this latter depends the happiness of life; the other renders us dissatisfied with its ordinary enjoyments.

He is an extraordinary person, *indiscreet* to a degree that is surprising, exposing his own feelings, and entering into details of those of others, that ought to be sacred, with a degree of frankness as unnecessary as it is rare. Incontinence of speech is his besetting sin. He is, I am persuaded, incapable of keeping any secret, however it may concern his own honor or that of another; and the first person with whom he found himself *tête-à-tête* would be made the confidant without any reference to his worthiness of the confidence or not. This indiscretion proceeds not from malice, but I should say, from want of delicacy of mind. To this was owing the publication of his "Farewell," addressed to Lady Byron—a farewell that must have lost all effect as an appeal to her feelings the moment it was exposed to the public—nay, must have offended her delicacy.

Byron spoke to-day in terms of high commendation of Hope's "Anastasius;" said that he wept bitterly over many pages of it, and for two reasons—first, that *he* had not written it, and, secondly, that *Hope* had; for that it was necessary to like a man excessively to pardon his writing such a book—a book, as he said, excelling all recent productions, as much in wit and talent, as in true pathos. He added, that he would have given his two most approved poems to have been the author of "Anastasius."

From "Anastasius" he wandered to the works of Mr. Galt, praised the "Annals of the Parish" very highly, as also "The Entail," which we had lent him, and some scenes of which he said had affected him very much. "The characters in Mr. Galt's novels have an identity," added Byron, "that reminds me of Wilkie's pictures."

As a woman, I felt proud of the homage he paid to the genius of Mrs. Hemans, and as a passionate admirer of her poetry,

bitterness; and whatever may be the sufferings of Lady Byron, they are more than avenged by what her husband feels.

It appears to me extraordinary, that a person who has given such interesting sketches of the female character, as Byron has in his works, should be so little *au fait* of judging feminine feeling under certain circumstances. He is surprised that Lady Byron has never relented since his absence from England; but he forgets how that absence has been filled up on his part. I ventured to suggest this, and hinted that, perhaps, had his conduct been irreproachable during the first years of their separation, and unstained by any attachment that could have widened the breach between them, it is possible that Lady Byron might have become reconciled to him; but that no woman of delicacy could receive or answer letters written beneath the same roof that sheltered some female favorite, whose presence alone proved that the husband could not have those feelings of propriety or affection towards his absent wife, the want of which constitutes a crime that all *women*, at least, can understand to be one of those least pardonable. How few men understand the feelings of women! Sensitive, and easily wounded as we are, obliged to call up pride to support us in trials that always leave fearful marks behind, how often are we compelled to assume the semblance of coldness and indifference when the heart inly bleeds; and the decent composure, put on with our visiting garments to appear in public, and, like them, worn for a few hours, are wirh them laid aside; and all the dreariness, the heart-consuming cares, that woman alone can know, return to make us feel, that though we may disguise our sufferings from others, and deck our countenance with smiles, we cannot deceive ourselves, and are but the more miserable from the constraint we submit to! A woman only can understand a woman's heart—we cannot, dare not, complain—sympathy is denied us, because we must not lay open the wounds that excite it; and even the most legitimate feelings are too sacred in female estimation to be exposed—thus while we nurse the grief "that lies too deep for tears," and consumes alike health and peace, a man may with impunity express all, nay, more than he feels—court and meet sympathy, while his leisure hours are cheered by occupations and pleasures, the latter too often such as ought to prove how little he stood in need of compassion, except for his vices.

I stated something of this to Lord Byron to-day, *apropos* to the difference between his position and that of his wife. He tried to prove to me how much more painful was his situation than hers; but I effected some alteration in his opinion when I had fairly placed their relative positions before him—at least such as they appeared to me. I represented Lady Byron to him separating in early youth, whether from just or mistaken motives for such a step, from the husband of her choice, after little more than a brief year's union, and immediately after that union had been cemented by the endearing, strengthening tie of a new-born infant! carrying with her into solitude this fond and powerful remembrancer of its father, how much must it have cost her to resist the appeals of such a pleader!—wearing away her youth in almost monastic seclusion, her motives questioned by some, and appreciated by few—seeking consolation alone in the discharge of her duties, and avoiding all external demonstrations of a grief that her pale cheek and solitary existence are such powerful vouchers for! Such is the portrait I gave him of Lady Byron—his own I ventured to sketch as follows.

I did not enter into the causes, or motives, of the separation, because I know them not, but I dwelt on his subsequent conduct:—the appealing on the separation to public sympathy, by the publication of verses which ought only to have met the eye of her to whom they were addressed, was in itself an outrage to that delicacy, that shrinks from, and shuns publicity, so inherent in the female heart. He leaves England—the climate, modes, and customs of which had never been congenial to his taste—to seek beneath the sunny skies of Italy, and all the soul-exciting objects that classic land can offer, a consolation for domestic disappointment. How soon were the broken ties of conjugal affection replaced by less holy ones! I refer not to his attachment to La Contessa Guiccioli, because at least it is of a different and a more pure nature, but to those degrading *liaisons* which marked the first year or two of his residence in Italy, and must ever, from their revolting coarseness remain a stain on his fame. It may be urged that disappointment and sorrow drove him into such excesses; but admitting this, surely we must respect the grief that is borne in solitude, and with the most irreproachable delicacy of conduct, more than that which flies to gross sensualities for relief.

Such was the substance, and I believe

nearly the words I repeated to him to-day; and it is but justice to him to say that they seemed to make a deep impression. He said that if my portrait of Lady Byron's position was indeed a faithful one, she was much more to be pitied than he; that he felt deeply for her, but that he had never viewed their relative situations in the same light before; he had always considered her as governed wholly by pride.

I urged that my statement was drawn from facts; that, of the extreme privacy and seclusion of her life, ever since the separation, there could be no doubt, and this alone vouched for the feelings that led to it.

He seemed pleased and gratified by the reflections I had made, insensibly fell into a tone of tenderness in speaking of Lady Byron, and pressed my hand with more than usual cordiality. On bidding me good bye, his parting words were, "You probe old and half-healed wounds, but though you give pain, you excite more healthy action, and do good."

His heart yearns to see his child; all children of the same age remind him of her, and he loves to recur to the subject.

Poor Byron has hitherto been so continually occupied with dwelling on, and analysing his own feelings, that he has not reflected on those of his wife. He cannot understand her observing such a total silence on their position, because he could not, and cannot, resist making it the topic of conversation with even chance associates: this, which an impartial observer of her conduct would attribute to deep feelings, and a sense of delicacy, he concludes to be caused by pride and want of feeling. We are always prone to judge of others by ourselves, which is one of the reasons why our judgments are in general so erroneous. Man may be judged of by his species *en masse*, but he who would judge of mankind in the aggregate, from one specimen of the genus, must be often in error, and this is Byron's case.

Lord Byron told me to-day, that he had been occupied in the morning making his will; that he had left the bulk of his fortune to his sister, as his daughter having, in right of her mother, a large fortune, he thought it unnecessary to increase it; he added that he had left La Contessa Guiccioli £10,000, and had intended to have left her £25,000, but that she had suspected his intentions, and urged him so strongly not to do so, or indeed to leave her any thing, that he had changed the sum to £10,000. He said that this was one, of innumerable instances, of her delicacy and disinterestedness, of which he had repeated proofs; that she was so fearful of the possibility of having interested motives attributed to her, that he was certain she would prefer the most extreme poverty to incurring such a suspicion. I observed, that were I he, I would have left her the sum I had originally intended, as, in case of his death, it would be a flattering proof of his esteem for her, and she had always the power of refusing the whole, or any part of the bequest she thought proper. It appeared to me, that the more delicacy and disinterestedness she displayed, the more decided ought he to be, in marking his appreciation of her conduct. He appeared to agree with me, and passed many encomiums on La Contessa.

He talked to-day of Sir Francis Burdett, of whose public and private character he entertains the most exalted opinion. He said that it was gratifying to behold in him the rare union of a heart and head that left nothing to be desired, and dwelt with evident pride and pleasure on the mental courage displayed by Sir Francis in befriending and supporting him, when so many of his professed friends stood aloof, on his separation from Lady Byron. The defalcation of his friends, at the moment he most required them, has made an indelible impression on his mind, and has given him a very bad opinion of his countrymen. I endeavored to reason him out of this, by urging the principle that mankind, *en masse*, are every where the same, but he denied this, on the plea that, as civilisation had arrived at a greater degree of perfection in England than elsewhere, selfishness, its concomitant, there flourished so luxuriantly, as to overgrow all generous and kind feelings. He quoted various examples of friends, and even the nearest relations, deserting each other in the hour of need, fearful that any part of the censure heaped on some less fortunate connection might fall on them. I am unwilling to believe that his pictures are not overdrawn, and hope I shall always think so—

"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

"Talking of friends," said Byron, "Mr. Hobhouse has been the most impartial, or perhaps (added he) *unpartial* of all my friends; he always told me my faults, but I must do him the justice to add, that he told them to *me*, and not to others." I observed that the epithet impartial was the applicable one; but he denied it, say-

ing that Mr. Hobhouse must have been *unpartial*, to have discerned all the errors he had pointed out; "but," he added, laughing, "I could have told him of some more which he had not discovered, for even, then, *avarice* had made itself strongly felt in my nature."

Byron came to see us to-day, and appeared extremely discomposed; after half-an-hour's conversation on indifferent subjects, he at length broke forth with, "Only fancy my receiving to-day a tragedy dedicated as follows—'From George ——— to George Byron!' This is being cool with a vengeance. I never was more provoked. How stupid, how ignorant to pass over my rank! I am determined not to read the tragedy; for a man capable of committing such a solecism in good breeding and common decency, can write nothing worthy of being read." We were astonished at witnessing the annoyance this circumstance gave him, and more than ever convinced, that the pride of aristocracy is one of the peculiar features of his character. If he sometimes forgets his rank, he never can forgive any one else's doing so; and as he is not naturally dignified, and his propensity to flippancy renders him still less so, he often finds himself in a false position, by endeavoring to recover lost ground. We endeavored to console him by telling him that we knew Mr. George ——— a little, and that he was clever and agreeable, as also that his passing over the title of Byron was meant as a compliment—it was a delicate preference shown to the renown accorded to George Byron the poet, over the rank and title, which were adventitious advantages, ennobled by the possessor, but that could add nothing to his fame. All our arguments were vain; he said "this could not be the man's feelings, as he reduced him (Lord Byron) to the same level as himself." It is strange to see a person of such brilliant and powerful genius sullied by such incongruities. Were he but sensible how much the *Lord* is overlooked in the *Poet* he would be less vain of his rank: but as it is, this vanity is very prominent, and resembles more the pride of a *parvenu* than the calm dignity of an ancient aristocrat. It is also evident that he attaches importance to the appendages of rank and station. The trappings of luxury, to which a short use accustoms every one, seem to please him; he observes, nay, comments upon them, and oh! mortifying conclusion, appears, at least for the moment, to think more highly of their possessors. As his own mode of life is so extremely simple, this seems the more extraordinary; but every thing in him is contradictory and extraordinary. Of his friends he remarks, "this or that person is a man of family, or he is a *parvenu*, the marks of which character, in spite of all his affected gentility, break out in a thousand ways." We were not prepared for this; we expected to meet a man more disposed to respect the nobility of genius than that of rank; but we have found the reverse. In talking of Ravenna, the natal residence of La Contessa Guiccioli, he dwells with peculiar complacency on the equipage of her husband; talks of the six black carriage-horses, without which the old Conte seldom moved, and their spacious palazzo; also the wealth of the Conte, and the distinguished connections of the lady. He describes La Contessa as being of the middle stature, finely formed, exquisitely fair, her features perfectly regular, and the expression of her countenance remarkable for its animation and sweetness, her hair auburn, and of great beauty. No, wonder, then, that such rare charms have had power to fix his truant heart; and, as he says that to these she unites accomplishments and amiability, it may be concluded, as indeed he declares, that this is his last attachment. He frequently talks of Alfieri, and always with enthusiastic admiration. He remarks on the similarity of their tastes and pursuits, their domesticating themselves with women of rank, their fondness for animals, and, above all, for horses; their liking to be surrounded by birds and pets of various descriptions, their passionate love of liberty, habitual gloom, &c., &c. In short, he produces so many points of resemblance, that it leads one to suspect that he is a copy of an original he has long studied.

This, again, proceeds from a want of self-respect; but we may well pardon it, when we reflect on the abuse, calumny, envy, hatred, and malice, that, in spite of all his genius, have pursued him from the country that genius must adorn.

Talking of Alfieri, he told me to-day, that when that poet was travelling in Italy, a very romantic, and, as he called her, *tête montée* Italian Principessa, or Duchessa, who had long been an enthusiastic admirer of his works, having heard that he was to pass within fifty miles of her residence, set off to encounter him; and having arrived at the inn where he sojourned, was shown into a room where she was told Alfieri was writing. She enters, agitated and fatigued—sees a very good-looking

man seated at a table, whom she concludes must be Alfieri, throws herself into his arms—and, in broken words, declares her admiration, and the distance she has come to declare it. In the midst of the lady's impassioned speeches, Alfieri enters the room, casts a glance of surprise and *hauteur* at the pair, and lets fall some expression that discloses to the humbled Principessa the shocking mistake she has made.

The poor Secretary (for such he was) is blamed by the lady, while he declares his innocence, finding himself, as he says, in the embraces of a lady who never allowed him even a moment to interrupt her, by the simple question of what she meant! Alfieri retired in offended dignity, shocked that any one could be mistaken for him, while the Principessa had to retrace her steps, her enthusiasm somewhat cooled by the mistake and its consequences.

Byron says that the number of anonymous amatory letters and portraits he has received, and all from English ladies, would fill a large volume. He says he has never noticed any of them; but it is evident he recurs to them with complacency.

He talked to-day of a very different kind of letter, which appears to have made a profound impression on him; he has promised to show it to me; it is from a Mr. Sheppard, inclosing him a prayer offered up for Byron, by the wife of Mr. Sheppard, and sent since her death. He says he never was more touched than on perusing it, and that it has given him a better opinion of human nature.

The following is the copy of the letter and prayer, which Lord Byron has permitted me to make.

"TO LORD BYRON.

"*Frome, Somerset, Nov.* 21, 1821.

"My Lord:—More than two years since, a lovely and beloved wife was taken from me, by a lingering disease, after a very short union. She possessed unvarying gentleness and fortitude, and a piety so retiring as rarely to disclose itself in words, but so influential as to produce uniform benevolence of conduct. In the last hour of life, after a farewell look on a lately-born and only infant, for whom she had evinced inexpressible affection, her last whispers were, 'God's happiness!—God's happiness!'

"Since the second anniversary of her decease, I have read some papers which no one had seen during her life, and which contain her most secret thoughts. I am induced to communicate to your Lordship a passage from these papers, which there is no doubt refers to yourself, as I have more than once heard the writer mention your agility on the rocks at Hastings.

"'Oh, my God, I take encouragement from the assurance of thy word, to pray to Thee in behalf of one for whom I have lately been much interested. May the person to whom I allude (and who is now, we fear, as much distinguished for his neglect of Thee as for the transcendant talents thou hast bestowed on him), be awakened to a sense of his own danger, and led to seek that peace of mind in a proper sense of religion, which he has found this world's enjoyment unable to procure! Do Thou grant that his future example may be productive of far more extensive benefit than his past conduct and writings have been of evil; and may the Sun of Righteousness, which we trust will, at some future period, arise on him, be bright in proportion to the darkness of those clouds which guilt has raised around him, and the balm which it bestows, healing and soothing in proportion to the keenness of that agony which the punishment of his vices has inflicted on him! May the hope that the sincerity of my own efforts for the attainment of holiness, and the approval of my own love for the Great Author of religion, will render this prayer, and every other for the welfare of mankind, more efficacious—cheer me in the path of duty; but, let me not forget, that while we are permitted to animate ourselves to exertion by every innocent motive, these are but the lesser streams which may serve to increase the current, but which, deprived of the grand fountain of good, (a deep conviction of inborn sin, and firm belief in the efficacy of Christ's death for the salvation of those who trust in him, and really wish to serve him,) would soon dry up, and leave us barren of every virtue as before.—

Hastings, July 31, 1814.'

"There is nothing, my Lord, in this extract which, in a literary sense, can at all interest you; but it may, perhaps, appear to you how worthy of reflection how deep and expansive a concern for the happiness of others the Christian faith can awaken in the midst of youth and prosperity. Here is nothing poetical and splendid, as in the expostulatory homage of M. Delamartine; but here is the *sublime*, my Lord; for this intercession was offered on

your account, to the supreme *Source* of happiness. It sprang from a faith more confirmed than that of the French poet, and from a charity, which, in combination with faith, showed its power unimpaired amidst the languors and pains of approaching dissolution. I will hope that a prayer, which, I am sure, was deeply sincere, may not always be unavailing.

"It would add *nothing*, my Lord, to the fame with which your genius has surrounded you, for an unknown and obscure individual to express his admiration of it. I had rather be numbered with those who wish and pray, that 'wisdom from above,' and 'peace,' and 'joy,' may enter such a mind.

"JOHN SHEPPARD."

On reading this letter and prayer, which Byron did aloud, before he consigned it to me to copy, and with a voice tremulous from emotion, and seriousness of aspect that showed how deeply it affected him, he observed, "Before I had read this prayer, I never rightly understood the expression, so often used, 'The beauty of holiness.' This prayer and letter has done more to give me a good opinion of religion, and its professors, than all the religious books I ever read in my life.

"Here were two most amiable and exalted minds offering prayers and wishes for the salvation of one considered by three parts of his countrymen to be beyond the pale of hope, and charitably doomed to everlasting torments. The religion that prays and hopes for the *erring* is the true religion, and the only one that could make a convert of me; and I date (continued Byron) my first impressions against religion to having witnessed how little its votaries were actuated by any true feeling of Christian charity. Instead of lamenting the disbelief, or pitying the transgressions (or at least the consequence) of the sinner, they at once cast him off, dwell with acrimony on his errors, and, not content with foredooming him to eternal punishment hereafter, endeavor, as much as they can, to render his earthly existence as painful as possible, until they have hardened him in his errors, and added hatred of his species to their number. Were all religious people like Mr. Sheppard and the amiable wife he has lost, we should have fewer sceptics: such examples would do more towards the work of conversion than all that ever was written on the subject.

"When Religion supports the sufferer in affliction and sickness, even unto death, its advantages are so visible, that all must wish to seek such a consolation; and when it speaks peace and hope to those who have strayed from its path, it softens feelings that severity must have hardened, and leads back the wanderer to the fold; but when it clothes itself in anger, denouncing vengeance, or shows itself in the pride of superior righteousness, condemning, rather than pitying, all erring brothers, it repels the wavering, and fixes the unrepentant in their sins. Such a religion can make few converts, but may make many dissenters to its tenets; for in religion, as in every thing else, its utility must be apparent, to encourage people to adopt its precepts; and the utility is never so evident as when we see professors of religion supported by its consolations, and willing to extend these consolations to those who have still more need of them—the misguided and the erring."

They who accuse Byron of being an unbeliever are wrong: he is *sceptical*, but not unbelieving; and it appears not unlikely to me that a time may come when his wavering faith in many of the tenets of religion may be as firmly fixed as is now his conviction of the immortality of the soul—a conviction that he declares every fine and noble impulse of his nature renders more decided. He is a sworn foe to Materialism, tracing every defect to which we are subject, to the infirmities entailed on us by the prison of clay in which the heavenly spark is confined. *Conscience*, he says, is to him another proof of the Divine Origin of Man, as is also his natural tendency to the love of good. A fine day, a moonlight night, or any other fine object in the phenomena of nature, excites (said Byron) strong feelings of religion in all elevated minds, and an outpouring of the spirit to the Creator, that, call it what we may, is the essence of innate love and gratitude to the Divinity.

There is a seriousness in Byron's manner, when he gets warmed by his subject, that impresses one with the truth of his statements. He observed to me, "I seldom *talk* of religion, but I *feel* it, perhaps, more than those who do. I speak to you on this topic freely, because I know you will neither laugh at, nor enter into a controversy with me. It is strange, but true, that Mrs. Sheppard is mixed up with all my religious aspirations: nothing ever so excited my imagination, and touched my heart, as her prayer. I have pictured her to myself a thousand times in the solitude of her chamber, struck by a malady that

generally engrosses all feeling for self, and those near and dear to one, thinking *of*, and praying for *me*, who was deemed by all an outcast. Her purity—her blameless life—and the deep humility expressed in her prayer—render her, in my mind, the most interesting and angelic creature that ever existed, and she mingles in all my thoughts of a future state. I would give any thing to have her portrait, though perhaps it would destroy the *beau idéal* I have formed of her. What strange thoughts pass through the mind, and how much are we influenced by adventitious circumstances! The phrase *lovely*, in the letter of Mr. Sheppard, has invested the memory of his wife with a double interest; but beauty and goodness have always been associated in my mind, because, through life, I have found them generally go together. I do not talk of mere beauty (continued Byron) of feature or complexion, but of expression, that looking out of the soul through the eyes, which, in my opinion, constitutes true beauty. Women have been pointed out to me as beautiful who never could have interested my feelings, from their want of countenance, or expression, which means countenance; and others, who were little remarked, have struck me as being captivating, from the force of countenance. A woman's face ought to be like an April day—susceptible of change and variety; but sunshine should often gleam over it, to replace the clouds and showers that may obscure its lustre—which, poetical description apart (said Byron,) in sober prose means, that good-humored smiles ought to be ready to chase away the expression of pensiveness or care that sentiment or earthly ills call forth. Women were meant to be the exciters of all that is finest in our natures, and the soothers of all that is turbulent and harsh. Of what use, then, can a handsome automaton be, after one has got acquainted with a face that knows no change, though it causes many? This is a style of looks I could not bear the sight of for a week; and yet such are the looks that pass in society for pretty, handsome, and beautiful. How beautiful Lady C—— was! She had no great variety of expression, but the predominant ones were purity, calmness, and abstraction. She looked as if she had never *caused* an unhallowed sentiment, or felt one—a sort of 'moonbeam on the snow,' as our friend Moore would describe her, that was lovely to look on.—Lady A. F—— *was* also very handsome. It is melancholy to talk of women in the past tense. What a pity, that of all flowers, none fade so soon as beauty! Poor Lady A. F—— has not got married. Do you know, I once had some thoughts of her as a wife; not that I was in love, as people call it, but I had argued myself into a belief that I ought to marry, and meeting her very often in society, the notion came into my head, not heart, that she would suit me. Moore, too, told me so much of her good qualities, all which was, I believe, quite true, that I felt tempted to propose to her, but did not, whether *tant mieux* or *tant pis*, God knows, supposing my proposal accepted. No marriage could nave turned out more unfortunately than the one I made—that is quite certain; and, to add to my agreeable reflections on this subject, I have the consciousness that had I possessed sufficient command over my own wayward humor, I might have rendered myself so dear and necessary to Lady Byron, that she would not, could not, have left me. It is certainly not very gratifying to my vanity to have been *planté* after so short a union, and within a few weeks after being made a father—a circumstance that one would suppose likely to cement the attachment. I always get out of temper when I recur to this subject; and yet, *malgré moi*, I find myself continually recurring to it.

Byron is a perfect chameleon, possessing the fabulous qualities attributed to that animal, of taking the color of whatever touches him. He is conscious of this, and says it is owing to the extreme *mobilité* of his nature, which yields to present impressions. It appears to me, that the consciousness of his own defects renders him still less tolerant to those of others—this perhaps is owing to their attempts to conceal them, more that from natural severity, as he condemns hypocrisy, more than any other vice—saying, it is the origin of all. If vanity, selfishness, or mundane sentiments, are brought in contact with him, every arrow in the armory of ridicule is let fly, and there is no shield sufficiently powerful to withstand them. If vice approaches, he assails it with the bitterest gall of satire; but when goodness appears, and that he is assured it is sincere, all the dormant affections of his nature are excited, and it is impossible not to observe, how tender and affectionate a heart his must have been, ere circumstances had soured it. This was never more displayed than in the impression made on him by the prayer of Mrs. Sheppard, and the letter of her husband. It is also evident in the generous impulses that he be-

trays on hearing of distress or misfortune, which he endeavors to alleviate; and, unlike the world in general, Byron never makes light of the griefs of others, but shows commiseration and kindness. There are days when he excites so strong an interest and sympathy, by showing such undoubtable proofs of good feeling, that every previous impression to his disadvantage fades away, and one is vexed with oneself for ever having harbored them. But, alas! "the morrow comes," and he is no longer the same being. Some disagreeable letter, review, or new example of the slanders with which he has been for years assailed, changes the whole current of his feelings—renders him reckless, Sardonic, and as unlike the Byron of the day before, as if they had nothing in common, —nay, he seems determined to efface any good impression he might have made, and appears angry with himself for having yielded to the kindly feelings that gave birth to it. After such exhibitions, one feels perplexed what opinion to form of him; and the individual who has an opportunity of seeing Byron very often, and for any length of time, if he or she stated the daily impressions candidly, would find, on reviewing them, a mass of heterogeneous evidence, from which it would be most difficult to draw a just conclusion. The affectionate manner in which he speaks of some of his juvenile companions has a delicacy and tenderness resembling the nature of woman more than that of man, and leads me to think that an extreme sensitiveness, checked by coming in contact with persons incapable of appreciating it, and affections chilled by finding a want of sympathy, have repelled, but could not eradicate, the seeds of goodness that now often send forth blossoms, and, with culture, may yet produce precious fruit.

I am sure, that if ten individuals undertook the task of describing Byron, no two, of the ten, would agree in their verdict respecting him, or convey any portrait that resembled the other, and yet the description of each might be correct, according to his or her received opinion; but the truth is, the chameleon-like character or manner of Byron renders it difficult to portray him; and the pleasure he seems to take in misleading his associates in their estimate of him increases the difficulty of the task. This extraordinary fancy of his has so often struck me, that I expect to see all the persons who have lived with him giving portraits, each unlike the other, and yet all bearing a resemblance to the original at some one time. Like the pictures given of some celebrated actor in his different characters, each likeness is affected by the dress and the part he has to fill. The portrait of John Kemble in Cato resembles not Macbeth nor Hamlet, and yet each is an accurate likeness of that admirable actor in those characters; so Byron, changing every day, and fond of misleading those whom he suspects might be inclined to paint him, will always appear different from the hand of each limner.

During our rides in the vicinity of Genoa, we frequently met several persons, almost all of them English, who evidently had taken that route purposely to see Lord Byron. "Which is he?" "That's he," I have frequently heard whispered as the different groups extended their heads to gaze at him, while he has turned to me—his pale face assuming, for the moment, a warmer tint—and said, "How very disagreeable it is to be so stared at! If you knew how I detest it, you would feel how great must be my desire to enjoy the society of my friends at the Hotel de la Ville, when I pay the price of passing through the town, and exposing myself to the gazing multitude on the stairs and in the antechambers." Yet there were days when he seemed more pleased than displeased at being followed and stared at. All depended on the humor he was in. When gay, he attributed the attention he excited to the true cause—admiration of his genius; but when in a less good-natured humor, he looked on it as an impertinent curiosity, caused by the scandalous histories circulated against him, and resented it as such.

He was peculiarly fond of flowers, and generally bought a large bouquet every day of a gardener whose grounds we passed. He told me that he liked to have them in his room, though they excited melancholy feelings, by reminding him of the evanescence of all that is beautiful, but that the melancholy was of a softer, milder character, than his general feelings.

Observing Byron one day in more than usually low spirits, I asked him if any thing painful had occurred. He sighed deeply, and said—"No, nothing new; the old wounds are still unhealed, and bleed afresh on the slightest touch, so that God knows there needs nothing new. Can I reflect on my present position without bitter feelings? Exiled from my country by a species of ostracism—the most humiliating to a proud mind, when *daggers* and not shells were used to ballot, inflicting men-

tal wounds more deadly and difficult to be healed than all that the body could suffer. Then the notoriety (as I call what you would kindly name fame) that follows me, precludes the privacy I desire, and renders me an object of curiosity, which is a continual source of irritation to my feelings. I am bound, by the indissoluble ties of marriage, to *one* who will *not* live with me, and live with one to whom I cannot give a legal right to be my companion, and who, wanting that right, is placed in a position humiliating to her and most painful to me. Were the Contessa Guiccioli and I married, we should, I am sure, be cited as an example of conjugal happiness, and the domestic and retired life we lead would entitle us to respect; but our union, wanting the legal and religious part of the ceremony of marriage, draws on us both censure and blame. She is formed to make a good wife to any man to whom she attached herself. She is fond of retirement—is of a most affectionate disposition—and noble-minded and disinterested to the highest degree. Judge then how mortifying it must be to me to be the cause of placing her in a false position. All this is not thought of when people are blinded by passion, but when passion is replaced by better feelings—those of affection, friendship, and confidence—when, in short, the *liaison* has all of marriage but its forms, then it is that we wish to give it the respectability of wedlock. It is painful (said Byron) to find oneself growing old without—

> that which should accompany old age,
> As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends.

I feel this keenly, reckless as I appear, though there are few to whom I would avow it, and certainly not to a man."

"With all my faults," said Byron one day, "and they are, as you will readily believe, innumerable, I have never traduced the only two women with whom I was ever domesticated, Lady Byron and the Contessa Guiccioli. Though I have had, God knows, reason to complain of Lady Byron's leaving me, and all that her desertion entailed, I defy malice itself to prove that I ever spoke against her; on the contrary, I have always given her credit for the many excellent and amiable qualities she possesses, or at least possessed, when I knew her; and I have only to regret that forgiveness, for real, or imagined, wrongs, was not amongst their number. Of the Guiccioli, I could not, if I would, speak ill; her conduct towards me has been faultless, and there are few examples of such complete and disinterested affection as she has shown towards me all through our attachment."

I observed in Lord Byron a candor in talking of his own defects, nay, a seeming pleasure in dwelling on them, that I never remarked in any other person: I told him this one day, and he answered, "Well, does not that give you hopes of my amendment?" My reply was, "No; I fear by continually recapitulating them, you will get so accustomed to their existence, as to conquer your disgust of them. You remind me of Belcour, in the 'West Indian,' when he exclaims, 'No one sins with more repentance, or repents with less amendment than I do.'" He laughed, and said, "Well, only wait, and you will see me one day become all that I ought to be; I am determined to *leave* my sins, and not wait until *they* leave me: I have reflected seriously on all my faults, and that is the first step towards amendment. Nay, I have made more progress than people give me credit for; but, the truth is, I have such a detestation of cant, and am so fearful of being suspected of yielding to its outcry, that I make myself appear rather *worse* than better than I am."

"You will believe me, what I sometimes believe myself, mad," said Byron one day, "when I tell you that I seem to have *two* states of existence, *one* purely contemplative, during which the crimes, faults, and follies of mankind are laid open to my view, (my own forming a prominent object in the picture,) and the other *active*, when I play my part in the drama of life, as if impelled by some power over which I have no control, though the consciousness of doing wrong remains. It is as though I had the faculty of discovering error, without the power of avoiding it. How do you account for this?" I answered, "That, like all the phenomena of thought, it was unaccountable; but that contemplation, when too much indulged, often produced the same effect on the mental faculties that the dwelling on bodily ailments effected in the physical powers—we might become so well acquainted with diseases, as to find all their symptoms in ourselves and others, without the power of preventing or curing them; nay, by the force of imagination, might end in the belief that we were afflicted with them to such a degree as to lose all enjoyment of life, which state is termed hypochondria; but the hypochondria which arises from the belief in mental

diseases is still more insupportable, and is increased by contemplation of the supposed crimes or faults, so that the mind should be often relaxed from its extreme tension, and other and less exciting subjects of reflection presented to it. Excess in thinking, like all other excesses, produces re-action, and add the two words 'too much' before the word thinking, in the two lines of the admirable parody of the brothers Smith—

Thinking is but an idle waste of thought,
And nought is everything, and everything is nought;

and, instead of parody, it becomes true philosophy."

We both laughed at the abstract subject we had fallen upon; and Byron remarked, "How few would guess the general topics that occupy our conversation!" I added, "It may not, perhaps, be very amusing, but at all events it is better than scandal." He shook his head, and said, "All subjects are good in their way, provided they are sufficiently diversified; but scandal has something so piquant—it is a sort of Cayenne to the mind—that I confess I like it, particularly if the objects are one's own particular friends."

"Of course you know Luttrel," said Lord Byron. "He is a most agreeable member of society, the best sayer of good things, and the most epigrammatic conversationist I ever met; there is a terseness, and wit, mingled with fancy, in his observations, that no one else possesses, and no one so peculiarly understands the *apropos*. His 'Advice to Julia' is pointed, witty, and full of observation, showing in every line a knowledge of society, and a tact rarely met with. Then, unlike all, or most other wits, Luttrel is never obtrusive; even the choicest *bon mots* are only brought forth when perfectly applicable and then are given in a tone of good breeding which enhances their value.

"Moore is very sparkling in a choice or chosen society (said Byron); with lord and lady listeners he shines like a diamond, and thinks that, like that precious stone, his brilliancy should be reserved *pour le beau monde*. Moore has a happy disposition, his temper is good, and he has a sort of fire-fly imagination, always in movement, and in each evolution displaying new brilliancy. He has not done justice to himself in living so much in society; much of his talents are frittered away in display, to support the character of 'a man of wit about town,' and Moore was meant for something better. Society and genius are incompatible, and the latter can rarely, if ever, be in close or frequent contact with the former, without degenerating: it is otherwise with wit and talent, which are excited and brought into play by the friction of society, which polishes and sharpens both. I judge from personal experience; and as some portion of genius has been attributed to me, I suppose I may, without any extraordinary vanity, quote my ideas on this subject. Well, then, (continued Byron,) if I have any genius, (which I grant is problematical,) all I can say is, that I have always found it fade away, like snow before the sun, when I have been living much in the world. My ideas became dispersed and vague, I lost the power of concentrating my thoughts, and became another being; you will perhaps think a better, on the principle that any change in me must be for the better: but no—instead of this, I became worse, for the recollection of former mental power remained, reproaching me with present inability, and increased the natural irritability of my nature. It must be this consciousness of diminished power that renders old people peevish, and, I suspect, the peevishness will be in proportion to former ability. Those who have once accustomed themselves to think and reflect deeply in solitude, will soon begin to find society irksome; the small money of conversation will appear insignificant, after the weighty metal of thought to which they have been used, and like the man who was exposed to the evils of poverty while in possession of one of the largest diamonds in the world, which, from its size, could find no purchaser, such a man will find himself in society unable to change his lofty and profound thoughts into the conventional small-talk of those who surround him. But, bless me; how I have been holding forth! (said Byron.) Madame de Staël herself never declaimed more energetically, or succeeded better, in *ennuyant* her auditors than I have done, as I perceive you look dreadfully bored. I fear I am grown a sad proser, which is a bad thing, more especially after having been, what I swear to you I once heard a lady call me, a sad poet. The whole of my tirade might have been comprised in the simple statement of my belief that genius shuns society, and that, except for the indulgence of vanity, society would be well disposed to return the compliment, as they have little in common between them.

"Who would willingly possess genius? None, I am persuaded, who knew the mi-

sery it entails, its temperament producing continual irritation, destructive alike to health and happiness—and what are its advantages?—to be envied, hated, and persecuted in life, and libelled in death. Wealth may be pardoned (continued Byron,) if its possessor diffuses it liberally; beauty may be forgiven provided it is accompanied by folly; talent may meet with toleration if it be not of a very superior order, but genius can hope for no mercy. If it be of a stamp that insures its currency, those who are compelled to receive it will indemnify themselves by finding out a thousand imperfections in the owner, and as they cannot approach his elevation, will endeavor to reduce him to their level by dwelling on the errors from which genius is not exempt, and which forms the only point of resemblance between them. We hear the errors of men of genius continually brought forward, while those that belong to mediocrity are unnoticed; hence people conclude that errors peculiarly appertain to genius, and that those who boast it not, are saved from them. Happy delusion! but not even this belief can induce them to commiserate the faults they condemn. It is the fate of genius to be viewed with severity instead of the indulgence that it ought to meet, from the gratification it dispenses to others; as if its endowments could preserve the possessor from the alloy that marks the nature of mankind. Who can walk the earth, with eyes fixed on the heavens, without often stumbling over the hinderances that intercept the path? while those who are intent only on the beaten road escape. Such is the fate of men of genius; elevated over the herd of their fellow-men, with thoughts that soar above the sphere of their physical existence, no wonder that they stumble when treading the mazes of ordinary life, with irritated sensibility, and mistaken views of all the common occurrences they encounter."

Lord Byron dined with us to-day: we all observed that he was evidently discomposed: the dinner and servants had no sooner disappeared, than he quoted an attack against himself in some newspaper as the cause. He was very much irritated —much more so than the subject merited, and showed how keenly alive he is to censure, though he takes so little pains to avoid exciting it. This is a strange anomaly that I have observed in Byron—an extreme susceptibility to censorious observations, and a want of tact in not knowing how to steer clear of giving cause to them, that is extraordinary. He winces under castigation, and writhes in agony under the infliction of ridicule, yet gives rise to attack every day. Ridicule is, however, the weapon he most dreads, perhaps, because it is the one he wields with most power; and I observe he is sensitively alive to its slightest approach. It is also the weapon with which he assails all; friend and foe alike come under its cutting point; and the laugh, which accompanies each sally, as a deadly incision is made in some vulnerable quarter, so little accords with the wound inflicted, that it is as though one were struck down by summer lightning while admiring its brilliant play.

Byron likes not contradiction: he waxed wroth to-day, because I defended a friend of mine whom he attacked, but ended by taking my hand, and saying he honored me for the warmth with which I defended an absent friend, adding with irony, "Moreover, when he is not a poet, or even prose writer, by whom you can hope to be repaid by being handed down to posterity, as his defender."

"I often think," said Byron, "that I inherit my violence and bad temper from my poor mother—not that my father, from all I could ever learn, had a much better; so that it is no wonder I have such a very bad one. As long as I can remember any thing, I recollect being subject to violent paroxysms of rage; so disproportioned to the cause, as to surprise me when they were over, and this still continues. I cannot coolly view any thing that excites my feelings; and once the lurking devil in me is roused, I lose all command of myself. I do not recover a good fit of rage for days after: mind, I do not by this mean that the ill-humor continues, as, on the contrary, that quickly subsides, exhausted by its own violence; but it shakes me terribly, and leaves me low and nervous after. Depend on it, people's tempers must be corrected while they are children; for not all the good resolutions in the world can enable a man to conquer habits of ill-humor or rage, however he may regret having given way to them. My poor mother was generally in a rage every day, and used to render me sometimes almost frantic; particularly when, in her passion, she reproached me with my personal deformity, I have left her presence to rush into solitude, where, unseen, I could vent the rage and mortification I endured, and curse the deformity, that I now began to consider as a signal mark of the injustice of Providence. Those were bitter moments: even

now, the impression of them is vivid in my mind; and they cankered a heart that I believe was naturally affectionate, and destroyed a temper always disposed to be violent. It was my feelings at this period that suggested the idea of 'The Deformed Transformed.' I often look back on the days of my childhood, and am astonished at the recollection of the intensity of my feelings at that period;—first impressions are indelible. My poor mother, and after her my school-fellows by their taunts, led me to consider my lameness as the greatest misfortune, and I have never been able to conquer this feeling. It requires great natural goodness of disposition, as well as reflection, to conquer the corroding bitterness that deformity engenders in the mind, and which, while preying on itself, sours one towards all the world. I have read, that where personal deformity exists, it may be always traced in the face, however handsome the face may be. I am sure that what is meant by this is, that the consciousness of it gives to the countenance an habitual expression of discontent, which I believe is the case; yet it is too bad (added Byron with bitterness) that, because one had a defective foot, one cannot have a perfect face."

He indulges a morbid feeling on this subject that is extraordinary, and that leads me to think it has had a powerful effect in forming his character. As Byron had said that his own position had led to his writing "The Deformed Transformed," I ventured to remind him that, in the advertisement to that drama, he had stated it to have been founded on the novel of "The Three Brothers." He said that both statements were correct, and then changed the subject, without giving me an opportunity of questioning him on the unacknowledged, but visible, resemblances between other of his works and that extraordinary production. It is possible that he is unconscious of the plagiary of ideas he has committed; for his reading is so desultory, that he seizes thoughts which in passing through the glowing alembic of his mind, become so embellished as to lose all identity with the original crude embryos he had adopted. This was proved to me in another instance, when a book that he was constantly in the habit of looking over fell into my hands, and I traced various passages marked by his pencil or by his notes; which gave me the idea of having led to certain trains of thought in his works. He told me that he rarely ever read a page that did not give rise to chains of thought, the first idea serving as the original link on which the others were formed—

Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise.

I have observed, that, in conversation, some trifling remark has often led him into long disquisitions, evidently elicited by it; and so prolific is his imagination, that the slightest spark can warm it.

Comte Pietro Gamba lent me the "Age of Bronze," with a request that his having done so should be kept a profound secret, as Lord Byron, he said, would be angry if he knew it. This is another instance of the love of mystification that marks Byron, in trifles as well as in things of more importance. What can be the motive for concealing a *published* book, that is in the hands of all England?

Byron talks often of Napoleon, of whom he is a great admirer, and says that what he most likes in his character was his want of sympathy, which proves his knowledge of human nature, as those only could possess sympathy who were in happy ignorance of it. I told him that this carried its own punishment with it, as Napoleon found the want of sympathy when he most required it, and that some portion of what he affected to despise, namely enthusiasm and sympathy, would have saved him from the degradations he twice underwent when deserted by those on whom he counted. Not all Byron's expressed contempt for mankind can induce me to believe that he has the feeling; this is one of the many little artifices which he condescends to make use of to excite surprise in his hearers, and can only impose on the credulous. He is vexed when he discovers that any of his little *ruses* have not succeeded, and is like a spoiled child who finds out that he cannot have every thing his own way. Were he but sensible of his own powers, how infinitely superior would he be, for he would see the uselessness, as well as unworthiness, of being artificial, and of acting to support the character he wishes to play—a misanthrope, which nature never intended him for, and which he is not, and never will be. I see a thousand instances of good feeling in Byron, but rarely a single proof of stability; his abuse of friends, which is continual, has always appeared to me more inconsistent than ill-natured, and as if indulged in more to prove that he was superior to the partiality friendship engenders, than that they were unworthy of exciting the sentiment. He has the

rage of displaying his knowledge of human nature, and thinks this knowledge more proved by pointing out the blemishes than the perfections of the subjects he anatomises. Were he to confide in the effect his own natural character would produce, how much more would he be loved and respected; whereas, at present, those who most admire the genius will be the most disappointed in the man. The love of mystification is so strong in Byron, that he is continually letting drop mysterious hints of events in his past life: as if to excite curiosity, he assumes, on those occasions, a look and air suited to the insinuation conveyed: if it has excited the curiosity of his hearers, he is satisfied, looks still more mysterious, and changes the subject; but if it fails to rouse curiosity, he becomes evidently discomposed and sulky, stealing sly glances at the person he has been endeavoring to mystify, to observe the effect he has produced. On such occasions I have loooked at him a little maliciously, and laughed, without asking a single question; and I have often succeeded in making him laugh too at those mystifications, *manquée* as I called them. Byron often talks of the authors of the "Rejected Addresses," and always in terms of unqualified praise. He says that the imitations, unlike all other imitations, are full of genius, and that the "Cui Bono" has some lines that he should wish to have written. "Parodies," he said, "always gave a bad impression of of the original, but in the 'Rejected Addresses' the reverse was the fact;" and he quoted the second and third stanzas, in imitation of himself, as admirable, and just what he could have wished to write on a similar subject. His memory is extraordinary, for he can repeat lines from every author whose works have pleased him; and in reciting passages that have called forth his censure or ridicule, it is no less tenacious. He observed on the pleasure he felt at meeting people with whom he could go over old subjects of interest, whether on persons or literature, and said that nothing cemented friendship or companionship so strongly as having read the same books and known the same people.

I observed that when, in our rides, we came to any point of view, Byron paused, and looked at it, as if to impress himself with the recollection of it. He rarely praised what so evidently pleased him, and he became silent and abstracted for some time after, as if he was noting the principal features of the scene on the tablet of his memory. He told me that, from his earliest youth, he had a passion for solitude; that the sea, whether in a storm or calm, was a source of deep interest to him, and filled his mind with thoughts. "An acquaintance of mine," said Byron, laughing, "who is a votary of the lake, or simple school, and to whom I once expressed this effect of the sea on me, said that I might in this case say that the ocean served me as a vast inkstand: what do you think of that as a poetical image? It reminds me of a man who, talking of the effect of Mont Blanc from a distant mountain, said that it reminded him of a giant at his toilet, the feet in water, and the face prepared for the operation of shaving. Such observations prove that from the sublime to the ridiculous there is only one step, and really make one disgusted with the simple school." Recurring to fine scenery, Byron remarked, "That as artists filled their sketch-books with studies from Nature, to be made use of on after occasions, so he laid up a collection of images in his mind, as a store to draw on when he required them, and he found the pictures much more vivid in recollection, when he had not exhausted his admiration in expressions, but concentrated his powers in fixing them in memory. The end and aim of his life is to render himself celebrated: hitherto his pen has been the instrument to cut his road to renown, and it has traced a brilliant path; this, he thinks, has lost some of its point, and he is about to change it for the sword, to carve a new road to fame. Military exploits occupy much of his conversation, and still more of his attention; but even on this subject there is never the slightest *élan*, and it appears extraordinary to see a man about to engage in a chivalrous, and, according to the opinion of many, a Utopian undertaking, for which his habits peculiarly unfit him, without any indication of the enthusiasm that leads men to embark in such careers. Perhaps he thinks with Napoleon, that "Il n'y a rien qui refroidit, comme l' énthousiasme des autres;" but he is wrong—coldness has in general a sympathetic effect, and we are less disposed to share the feelings of others, if we observe that those feelings are not as warm as the occasion seems to require.

There is something so exciting in the idea of the greatest poet of his day sacrificing his fortune, his occupations, his enjoyments—in short, offering up to the altar of Liberty all the immense advan-

tages which station, fortune, and genius can bestow, that it is impossible to reflect on it without admiration; but when one hears this same person calmly talk of the worthlessness of the people he proposes to make those sacrifices for, the loans he means to advance, the uniforms he intends to wear, entering into petty details, and always with perfect *sang froid*, one's admiration evaporates, and the action loses all its charms, though the real merit of it still remains. Perhaps Byron wishes to show that his going to Greece is more an affair of *principle* than *feeling*, and, as such, more entitled to respect, though perhaps less likely to excite warmer feelings. However this may be, his whole manner and conversation on the subject are calculated to chill the admiration such an enterprise ought to create, and to reduce it to a more ordinary standard.

Byron is evidently in delicate health, brought on by starvation, and a mind too powerful for the frame in which it is lodged. He is obstinate in resisting the advice of medical men and his friends, who all have represented to him the dangerous effects likely to ensue from his present system. He declares that he has no choice but that of sacrificing the body to the mind, as that when he eats as others do he gets ill, and loses all power over his intellectual faculties; that animal food engenders the appetite of the animal fed upon, and he instances the manner in which boxers are fed as a proof, while, on the contrary, a regime of fish and vegetables served to support existence without pampering it. I affected to think that his excellence in, and fondness of, swimming, arose from his continually living on fish, and he appeared disposed to admit the possibility, until, being no longer able to support my gravity, I laughed aloud, which for the first minute discomposed him, though he ended by joining heartily in the laugh, and said —"Well, Miladi, after this hoax, never accuse me any more of mystifying; you did take me in until you laughed." Nothing gratifies him so much as being told that he grows thin. This fancy of his is pushed to an almost childish extent; and he frequently asks—"Don't you think I am getting thinner?" or, "Did you ever see any one so thin as I am, who was not ill?" He says he is sure no one could recollect him were he to go to England at present, and seems to enjoy this thought very much.

Byron affects a perfect indifference to the opinion of the world, yet is more influenced by it than most people—not in his conduct but in his dread of, and wincing under its censures. He was extremely agitated by his name being introduced in the P—— trial, as having assisted in making up the match, and showed a degree of irritation that proves he is as susceptible as ever to newspaper attacks, notwithstanding his boasts to the contrary. This susceptibility will always leave him at the mercy of all those who may choose to write against him, however insignificant they may be.

I noticed Byron one day more than usually irritable, though he endeavored to suppress all symptoms of it. After various sarcasms on the cant and hypocrisy of the times, which was always the signal that he was suffering from some attack made on him, he burst forth in violent invectives against America, and said that she now rivalled her mother country in cant, as he had that morning read an article of abuse, copied from an American newspaper, alluding to a report that he was going to reside there. We had seen the article, and hoped that it might have escaped his notice, but unfortunately he had perused it, and its effects on his temper were visible for several days after. He said that he never was sincere in his praises of the Americans, and that he only extolled their navy to pique Mr. Croker. There was something so childish in this avowal, that there was no keeping a serious face on hearing it; and Byron smiled himself, like a petulant spoiled child, who acknowledges having done something to spite a playfellow.

Byron is a great admirer of the poetry of Barry Cornwall, which, he says, is full of imagination and beauty, possessing a refinement and delicacy, that, whilst they add all the charms of a woman's mind, take off none of the force of a man's. He expressed his hope that he would devote himself to tragedy, saying that he was sure he would become one of the first writers of the day.

Talking of marriage, Byron said that there was no real happiness out of its pale. "If people like each other so well," said he, "as not to be able to live asunder, this is the only tie that can ensure happiness—all others entail misery. I put religion and morals out of the question, though of course the misery will be increased tenfold by the influence of both; but, admitting persons to have neither (and many such are, by the good-natured world, supposed to exist,) still *liaisons*,

that are not cemented by marriage, must produce unhappiness, when there is refinement of mind, and that honorable *fierté* which accompanies it. The humiliations and vexations a woman, under such circumstances, is exposed to, cannot fail to have a certain effect on her temper and spirits, which robs her of the charms that won affection; it renders her susceptible and suspicious; her self-esteem being diminished, she becomes doubly jealous of that of him for whom she lost it, and on whom she depends; and if he has feeling to conciliate her, he must submit to a slavery much more severe than that of marriage, without its respectability. Women become *exigeante* always in proportion to their consciousness of a decrease in the attentions they desire; and this very *exigeance* accelerates the flight of the blind god, whose approaches, the Greek proverb says, are always made walking, but whose retreat is flying. I once wrote some lines expressive of my feelings on this subject, and you shall have them." He had no sooner repeated the first line than I recollected having the verses in my possession, having been allowed to copy them by Mr. D. Kinnaird the day he received them from Lord Byron. The following are the verses:

COMPOSED Dec. 1, 1819.

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavor
Be tried in vain;
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And as a treasure
We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, formed for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then, for this reason,
Let's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh.
When link'd together,
Through every weather,
We pluck Love's feather
From out his wing,
He'll sadly shiver,
And droop for ever,
Without the plumage that sped his spring.
[*or*
Shorn of the plumage which sped his spring.]

Like Chiefs of Faction
His life is action,—
A formal paction,
Which curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His powers enhancing,
He must march on:
Repose but cloys him,
Retreat destroys him;
Love brooks not a degraded throne!

Wait not, fond lover!
Till years are over,
And then recover
As from a dream;
While each bewailing
The other's failing,
With wrath and railing
All hideous seem;
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Pause not till teazing
All passion blight:
If once diminish'd,
His reign is finish'd,—
One last embrace then, and bid good night!

So shall Affection
To recol ection
The dear connection
Bring back with joy;
You have not waited
Till, tired and hated,
All passion sated,
Began to cloy.
Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces,—
The same fond faces
As through the past;
And eyes, the mirrors
Of your sweet errors,
Reflect but rapture; not least, though last!

True separations
Ask more than patience;
What desperations
From such have risen!
And yet remaining
What is't but chaining
Hearts which, once waning,
Beat 'gainst their prison?
Time can but cloy love,
And use destroy love:
The winged boy, Love,
Is but for boys;
You'll find it torture,
Though sharper, shorter,
To wean, and not wear out your joys.

They are so unworthy of the author, that they are merely given as proof that the greatest genius can sometimes write bad verses; as even Homer nods. I remarked to Byron, that the sentiment of the poem differed with that which he had just given me of marriage: he laughed, and said, "Recollect, the lines were written nearly four years ago; and we grow wiser as we grow older; but mind, I still say, that I only approve marriage when the persons are so much attached as not to be able to live asunder, which ought always to be tried by a year's absence before the irrevocable knot was formed. The truest picture of the misery unhallowed *liaisons* produce," said Byron, "is in the 'Adolphe' of Benjamin Constant. I told Madame de Staël that there was more *morale* in that book than in all she ever wrote; and that

it ought always to be given to every young woman who had read 'Corinne,' as an antidote. Poor de Staël! she came down upon me like an avalanche, whenever I told her any of my amiable truths, sweeping every thing before her, with that eloquence that always overwhelmed, but never convinced. She however, good soul, believed she had convinced, when ever she silenced an opponent; an effect she generally produced, as she, to use an Irish phrase, succeeded in *bothering*, and producing a confusion of ideas that left one little able or willing to continue an argument with her. "I liked her daughter very much," said Byron: "I wonder will she turn out literary?—at all events, though she may not write, she possesses the power of judging the writings of others; is highly educated and clever; but I thought a little given to systems, which is not in general the fault of young women, and, above all, young French women."

One day that Byron dined with us, his chasseur, while we were at table, demanded to speak with him: he left the room, and returned in a few minutes in a state of violent agitation, pale with anger, and looking as I had never before seen him look, though I had often seen him angry. He told us that his servant had come to tell him that he must pass the gate of Genoa (his house being outside the town) before half-past ten o'clock, as orders were given that no one was to be allowed to pass after. This order, which had no personal reference to him, he conceived to be expressly levelled at him, and it rendered him furious: he seized a pen, and commenced a letter to our minister,—tore two or three letters one after the other, before he had written one to his satisfaction; and, in short, betrayed such ungovernable rage, as to astonish all who were present: he seemed very much disposed to enter into a personal contest with the authorities; and we had some difficulty in persuading him to leave the business wholly in the hands of Mr. Hill, the English Minister, who would arrange it much better.

Byron's appearance and conduct, on this occasion, forcibly reminded me of the description given of Rousseau: he declared himself the victim of persecution wherever he went; said that there was a confederacy between all governments to pursue and molest him, and uttered a thousand extravagances, which proved that he was no longer master of himself. I now understood how likely his manner was, under any violent excitement, to give rise to the idea that he was deranged in his intellects, and became convinced of the truth of the sentiment in the lines—

> Great wit to madness sure is near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

The next day, when we met, Byron said that he had received a satisfactory explanation from Mr. Hill, and then asked me if I had not thought him mad the night before:—"I assure you," said he, "I often think myself not in my right senses, and this is perhaps the only opinion I have in common with Lady Byron, who, dear sensible soul, not only thought me mad, but tried to persuade others into the same belief."

Talking one day on the difference between men's actions and thoughts, a subject to which he often referred, he observed, that it frequently happened that a man who was capable of superior powers of reflection and reasoning when alone, was trifling and common-place in society. "On this point," said he, "I speak feelingly, for I have remarked it of myself, and have often longed to know if other people had the same defect, or the same consciousness of it, which is, that while in solitude my mind was occupied in serious and elevated reflections, in society it sinks into a trifling levity of tone, that in another would have called forth my disapprobation and disgust. Another defect of mine is, that I am so little fastidious in the selection, or rather want of selection, of associates, that the most stupid men satisfy me quite as well, nay, perhaps better than the most brilliant; and yet all the time they are with me I feel, even while descending to their level, that they are unworthy of me, and what is worse, that we seem in point of conversation so nearly on an equality, that the effort of letting myself down to them costs me nothing, though my pride is hurt that they do not seem more sensible of the condescension. When I have sought what is called good society, it was more from a sense of propriety and keeping my station in the world, than from any pleasure it gave me, for I have been always disappointed, even in the most brilliant and clever of my acquaintances, by discovering some trait of egotism, or futility, that I was too egotistical and futile to pardon, as I find that we are least disposed to overlook the defects we are most prone to. Do you think as I do on this point?" said Byron. I answered, "That as a clear and spotless mirror reflects the brightest images, so is goodness ever most prone to see

good in others; and as a sullied mirror shows its own defects in all that it reflects, so does an impure mind tinge all that passes through it." Byron laughingly said, "That thought of yours is pretty, and just, which all pretty thoughts are not, and I shall pop it into my next poem. But how do you account for this tendency of mine to trifling and levity in conversation, when in solitude my mind is really occupied in serious reflections?" I answered, "That this was the very cause—the bow cannot remain always bent; the thoughts suggested to him in society were the reaction of a mind strained to its bent, and reposing itself after exertion; as also that feeling the inferiority of the persons he mixed with, the great powers were not excited, but lay dormant and supine, collecting their force for solitude." This opinion pleased him, and when I added that great writers were rarely good talkers, and *vice versâ*, he was still more gratified. He said that he disliked every-day topics of conversation; he thought it a waste of time; but that if he met a person with whom he could, as he said, think aloud, and give utterance to his thoughts on abstract subjects, he was sure it would excite the energies of his mind, and awaken sleeping thoughts that wanted to be stirred up. "I like to go home with a new idea," said Byron; "it sets my mind to work; I enlarge it, and it often gives birth to many others; this one can only do in a *tête-à-tête*. I felt the advantage of this in my rides with Hoppner at Venice; he was a good listener, and his remarks were acute and original; he is besides a thoroughly good man, and I knew he was in earnest when he gave me his opinions. But conversation, such as one finds in society, and, above all, in English society, is as uninteresting as it is artificial, and few can leave the best with the consolation of carrying away with him a new thought, or of leaving behind him an old friend." Here he laughed at his own antithesis, and added, "By Jove, it is true; you know how people abuse or quiz each other in England, the moment one is absent: each is afraid to go away before the other, knowing that, as is said in the 'School for Scandal,' he leaves his character behind. It is this certainty that excuses me to myself, for abusing my friends and acquaintances in their absence. I was once accused of this by an *ami intime*, to whom some devilish good-natured person had repeated what I had said of him; I had nothing for it but to plead guilty, adding, 'you know you have done the same by me fifty times, and yet you see I never was affronted, or liked you the less for it;' on which he laughed, and we were as good friends as ever. Mind you (a favorite phrase of Byron's) I never heard that he had abused me, but I took it for granted, and was right. So much for friends."

I remarked to Byron that his scepticism as to the sincerity and durability of friendship argued very much against his capability of feeling the sentiment, especially as he admitted that he had not been deceived by the *few* he had confided in, consequently his opinion must be founded on *self*-knowledge. This amused him, and he said that he verily believed that his knowledge of human nature, on which he had hitherto prided himself, was the criterion by which I judged so unfavorably of him, as he was sure I attributed his bad opinion of mankind to his perfect knowledge of *self*. When in good spirits, he liked badinage very much, and nothing seemed to please him more than being considered as a *mauvais sujêt:* he disclaimed the being so with an air that showed he was far from being offended at the suspicion. Of love he had strange notions: he said that most people had *le besoin d'aimer*, and that with this *besoin* the first person who fell in one's way contented one. He maintained that those who possessed the most imagination, poets for example, were most likely to be constant in their attachments, as with the *beau idéal* in their heads, with which they identified the object of their attachment, they had nothing to desire, and viewed their mistresses through the brilliant medium of fancy, instead of the common one of the eyes. "A poet, therefore;" said Byron, "endows the person he loves with all the charms with which his mind is stored, and has no need of actual beauty to fill up the picture. Hence he should select a woman who is rather good-looking than beautiful, leaving the latter for those who, having no imagination, require actual beauty to satisfy their tastes. And after all," said he, "where is the actual beauty that can come up to the bright 'imaginings' of the poet? where can one see women that equal the visions, half-mortal, half-angelic, that people his fancy? Love, who is painted blind (an allegory that proves the uselessness of beauty,) can supply all deficiencies with his aid; we can invest her whom we admire with all the attributes of loveliness, and though time may steal the roses from her cheek, and the lustre from her eye, still the origi-

nal *beau idéal* remains, filling the mind and intoxicating the soul with the overpowering presence of loveliness. I flatter myself that my Leila, Zuleika, Gulnare, Medora, and Haidee will always vouch for my taste in beauty: these are the bright creations of my fancy, with rounded forms, and delicacy of limbs, nearly so incompatible as to be rarely, if ever, united; for where, with some rare exceptions, do we see roundness of *contour* accompanied by lightness, and those fairy hands and feet that are at once the type of beauty and refinement. I like to shut myself up, close my eyes, and fancy one of the creatures of my imagination, with taper and rose-tipped fingers, playing with my hair, touching my cheek, or resting its little snowy-dimpled hand on mine. I like to fancy the fairy foot, round and pulpy, but small to diminutiveness, peeping from beneath the drapery that half conceals it, or moving in the mazes of the dance. I detest thin women; and unfortunately all, or nearly all plump women, have clumsy hands and feet, so that I am obliged to have recourse to imagination for my beauties, and there I always find them. I can so well understand the lover leaving his mistress that he might write to her—I should leave mine, not to write to, but to think of her, to dress her up in the habiliments of my ideal beauty, investing her with all the charms of the latter, and then adoring the idol I had formed. You must have observed that I give my heroines extreme refinement, joined to great simplicity and want of education. Now, refinement and want of education are incompatible, at least I have ever found them so: so here again, you see, I am forced to have recourse to imagination; and certainly it furnishes me with creatures as unlike the sophisticated beings of civilised existence, as they are to the still less tempting, coarse realities of vulgar life. In short, I am of opinion that poets do not require great beauty in the objects of their affection; all that is necessary for them is a strong and devoted attachment from the object, and where this exists, joined to health and good temper, little more is required, at least in early youth, though with advancing years men become more *exigeants*." Talking of the difference between love in early youth and in maturity, Byron said, "that, like the measles, love was most dangerous when it came late in life."

Byron had two points of ambition—the one to be thought the greatest poet of his day, and the other a nobleman and man of fashion, who could have arrived at distinction without the aid of his poetical genius. This often produced curious anomalies in his conduct and sentiments, and a sort of jealousy of himself in each separate character, that was highly amusing to an observant spectator. If poets were talked of or eulogised, he referred to the advantages of rank and station, as commanding that place in society by right, which was only accorded to genius by sufferance; for, said Byron, "Let authors do, say, or think what they please, they are never considered as men of fashion in the circles of *haut ton*, to which their literary reputations have given them an *entrée*, unless they happen to be of high birth. How many times have I observed this in London; as also the awkward efforts made by authors to trifle and act the fine gentleman like the rest of the herd in society. Then look at the *faiblesse* they betray in running after great people. Lords and ladies seem to possess, in their eyes, some power of attraction that I never could discover; and the eagerness with which they crowd to balls and assemblies, where they are as *déplacés* as *ennuyés*, all conversation at such places being out of the question, might lead one to think that they sought the heated atmospheres of such scenes as hot-beds to nurse their genius." If men of fashion were praised, Byron dwelt on the futility of their pursuits, their ignorance *en masse*, and the necessity of talents to give lustre to rank and station. In short, he seemed to think that the bays of the author ought to be entwined with a coronet to render either valuable, as, singly, they were not sufficiently attractive; and this evidently arose from *his* uniting, in his own person, rank and genius. I recollect once laughingly telling him that he was fortunate in being able to consider himself a poet amongst lords, and a lord amongst poets. He seemed doubtful as to how he should take the parody, but ended by laughing also.

Byron has often laughed at some *repartie* or joke against himself, and after a few minutes' reflection, got angry at it; but was always soon appeased by a civil apology; though it was clear that he disliked any thing like ridicule, as do most people who are addicted to play it off on others; and he certainly delighted in quizzing and ridiculing his associates. The translation of his works into different languages, however it might have flattered his *amour propre* as an author, never failed to enrage

him from the injustice he considered all translations rendered to his works. I have seen him furious at some passages in the French translation, which he pointed out as proof of the impossibility of the translators understanding the original, and he exclaimed, "*Il traditore! Il traditore!*" (instead of *Il traduttore!*) vowing vengeance against the unhappy traducers as he called them. He declared that every translation he had seen of his poems had so destroyed the sense, that he could not understand how the French and Italians could admire his works, as they professed to do. It proved, he said, at how low an ebb modern poetry must be in both countries. French poetry he detested, and continually ridiculed: he said it was discordant to his ears.

Of his own works, with some exceptions, he always spoke in derision, saying he could write much better, but that he wrote to suit the false taste of the day; and that if now and then a gleam of true feeling or poetry was visible in his productions, it was sure to be followed by the ridicule he could not suppress. Byron was not sincere in this, and it was only said to excite surprise, and show his superiority over the rest of the world. It was this same desire of astonishing people that led him to depreciate Shakspeare, which I have frequently heard him do, though from various reflections of his in conversation, and the general turn of his mind, I am convinced that he had not only deeply read, but deeply felt the beauties of our immortal poet.

I do not recollect ever having met Byron that he did not in some way or other, introduce the subject of Lady Byron. The impression left on my mind was, that she continually occupied his thoughts, and that he most anxiously desired a reconciliation with her. He declared that his marriage was free from every interested motive; and if not founded on love, as love is generally viewed, a wild, engrossing and ungovernable passion, there was quite sufficient liking in it to have insured happiness had his temper been better. He said that Lady Byron's appearance had pleased him from the first moment, and had always continued to please him; and that, had his pecuniary affairs been in a less ruinous state, his temper would not have been excited, as it daily, hourly was, during the brief period of their union, by the insolent creditors whom he was unable to satisfy and who drove him nearly out of his senses, until he lost all command of himself, and so forfeited Lady Byron's affection. "I must admit," said he, "that I could not have left a very agreeable impression on her mind. With my irascible temper, worked upon by the constant attacks of duns, no wonder that I became gloomy, violent, and I fear, often personally uncivil, if no worse, and so disgusted her; though had she really loved me, she would have borne with my infirmities, and made allowance for my provocations. I have written to her repeatedly, and am still in the habit of writing long letters to her, many of which I have sent, but without ever receiving an answer, and others that I did not send, because I despaired of their doing any good. I will show you some of them, as they may serve to throw a light on my feelings." The next day Byron sent me the letter addressed to Lady Byron, which has already appeared in "Moore's Life." He never could divest himself of the idea that she took a deep interest in him; he said that their child must always be a bond of union between them, whatever lapse of years or distance might separate them; and this idea seemed to comfort him. And yet, notwithstanding the bond of union a child was supposed to form between the parents, he did not hesitate to state, to the gentlemen of our party, his more than indifference towards the mother of his illegitimate daughter. Byron's mental courage was much stronger in his study than in society. In moments of inspiration, with his pen in his hand, he would have dared public opinion, and laughed to scorn the criticisms of all the *literati*, but with reflection came doubts and misgivings; and though in general he was tenacious in not changing what he had once written, this tenacity proceeded more from the fear of being thought to *want* mental courage, than from the existence of the quality itself. This operated also on his actions as well as his writings; he was the creature of impulse; never reflected on the possible or probable results of his conduct, until that conduct had drawn down censure and calumny on him, when he shrunk with dismay, "frightened at the sounds himself had made."

This sensitiveness was visible on all occasions, and extended to all his relations with others: did his friends or associates become the objects of public attack, he shrunk from the association, or at least from any public display of it, disclaimed the existence of any particular intimacy, though in secret he felt good-will to the persons. I have witnessed many examples of this, and became convinced that

his friendship was much more likely to be retained by those who stood well in the world's opinion, than by those who had even undeservedly forfeited it. I once made an observation to him on this point, which was elicited by something he had said of persons with whom I knew he had once been on terms of intimacy, and which he wished to disclaim: his reply was, "what the deuce good can I do them against public opinion? I shall only injure myself, and do them no service." I ventured to tell him, that this was precisely the system of the English whom he decried; and that self-respect, if no better feeling operated, ought to make us support in adversity those whom we had led to believe we felt interested in. He bulshed, and allowed I was right; "though," added he, "you are *singular* in both senses of the word, in your opinion, as I have had proofs; for at the moment when I was assailed *by all* the vituperation of the press in England at the separation, a friend of mine, who had written a complimentary passage to me, either by way of dedication or episode (I forget which he said,) suppressed it on finding public opinion running hard against me: he will probably produce it if he finds the quicksilver of the barometer of my reputation mounts to *beau fixe:* while it remains, as at present, at variable, it will never see the light, save and except I die in Greece, with a sort of demi-poetic and demi-heroic *renommée* attached to my memory."

Whenever Byron found himself in a difficulty—and the occasions were frequent—he had recourse to the example of others, which induced me to tell him that few people had so much profited by friends as he had; they always served "to point a moral and adorn a tale," being his illustrations for all the errors to which human nature is heir, and his apologetic examples whenever he wished to find an excuse for unpoetical acts of worldly wisdom. Byron rather encouraged than discouraged such observations; he said they had novelty to recommend them, and has even wilfully provoked their recurrence. Whenever I gave him my opinions, and still oftener when one of the party, whose sentiments partook of all the chivalric honor, delicacy, and generosity of the *beau idéal* of the poetic character, expressed his, Byron used to say, "Now for a Utopian system of the good and beautiful united; Lord B. ought to have lived in the heroic ages, and if all mankind would agree to act as *he* feels and acts, I agree with you we should all be certainly better, and, I do believe, happier than at present: but it would surely be absurd for a few—and to how few would it be limited—to set themselves up 'doing as they would be done by,' against a million who invariably act *vice versâ*. No; if goodness is to become *à-la-mode*—and I sincerely wish it were possible—we must have a fair start, and all begin at the same time, otherwise it will be like exposing a few naked and unarmed men against a multitude in armor." Byron was never *de bonne foi* in giving such opinions; indeed the whole of his manner betrayed this, as it was playful and full of *plaisanterie*, but still he wanted the accompaniment of habitual acts of disinterested generosity to convince one that his practice was better than his theory. He was one of the many whose lives prove how much more effect *example* has than precept. All the elements of good were combined in his nature, but they lay dormant for want of emulation to excite their activity. He was the slave of his passions, and he submitted not without violent, though, alas! unsuccessful, struggles to the chains they imposed; but each day brought him nearer to that age when reason triumphs over passion—when, had life been spared him, he would have subjugated those unworthy tyrants, and asserted his empire over that most rebellious of all dominions—self.

Byron never wished to live to be old; on the contrary, I have frequently heard him express the hope of dying young; and I remember his quoting Sir William Temple's opinion—that life is like wine; who would drink it pure must not draw it to the dregs—as being his way of thinking also. He said, it was a mistaken idea that passions subsided with age, as they only changed, and not for the better, Avarice usurping the place vacated by Love, and Suspicion filling up that of Confidence. "And this," continued Byron, "is what age and experience brings us. No; let me not live to be old: give me youth, which is the fever of reason, and not age, which is the palsy. I remember my youth, when my heart overflowed with affection towards all who showed any symptom of liking towards me; and now, at thirty-six, no very advanced period of life, I can scarcely, by raking up the dying embers of affection in that same heart, excite even a temporary flame to warm my chilled feelings." Byron mourned over the lost feelings of his youth, as we regret the lost friends of the same happy period; there was something melancholy in the

sentiment, and the more so, as one saw that it was sincere. He often talked of death, and never with dread. He said that its certainty furnished a better lesson than all the philosophy of the schools, as it enabled us to bear the ills of life, which would be unbearable were life of unlimited duration. He quoted Cowley's lines—

> O Life! thou weak-built isthmus, which doth proudly rise
> Up betwixt two eternities!

as an admirable description, and said they often recurred to his memory. He never mentioned the friends of whom Death had deprived him without visible emotion: he loved to dwell on their merits, and talked of them with a tenderness as if their deaths had been recent, instead of years ago. Talking of some of them, and deploring their loss, he observed, with a bitter smile, "But perhaps it is as well that they are gone: it is less bitter to mourn their deaths than to have to regret their alienation; and who knows but that, had they lived, they might have become as faithless as some others that I have known. Experience has taught me that the only friends that we can call our own—that can know no change—are those over whom the grave has closed: the seal of death is the only seal of friendship. No wonder, then, that we cherish the memory of those who loved us, and comfort ourselves with the thought that they were unchanged to the last. The regret we feel at such afflictions has something in it that softens our hearts, and renders us better. We feel more kindly disposed to our fellow-creatures, because we are satisfied with ourselves—first, for being able to excite affection, and, secondly, for the gratitude with which we repay it—to the memory of those we have lost; but the regret we prove at the alienation or unkindness of those we trusted and loved, is so mingled with bitter feelings, that they sear the heart, dry up the fountain of kindness in our breasts, and disgust us with human nature, by wounding our self-love in its most vulnerable part—the showing that we have failed to excite affection where we had lavished ours. One may learn to bear this uncomplainingly, and with outward calm; but the impression is indelible, and he must be made of different materials to the generality of men, who does not become a cynic, if he become nothing worse, after once suffering such a disappointment."

I remarked that his early friends had not given him cause to speak feelingly on this subject, and named Mr. Hobhouse as a proof: he answered, "Yes, certainly, he has remained unchanged, and I believe is unchangeable; and, if friendship, as most people imagine, consists in telling one truth—unvarnished, unadorned truth—he is indeed a friend; yet, hang it, I must be candid, and say I have had many other, and more agreeable, proofs of Hobhouse's friendship than the truths he always told me; but the fact is, I wanted him to sugar them over a little with flattery, as nurses do the physic given to children; and he never would, and therefore I have never felt quite content with him, though *as fond*, I respect him the more for his candor, while I respect myself very much less for my weakness in disliking it.

"William Bankes is another of my early friends. He is very clever, very original, and has a fund of information: he is also very good-natured; but he is not much of a flatterer. How unjust it is to accuse you ladies of loving flattery so much; I am quite sure that we men are quite as much addicted to it, but have not the amiable candor, to show it, as you all do. Adulation is never disagreeable when addressed to ourselves, though let us hear only half the same degree of it addressed to another, and we vote the addresser a parasite, and the addressed a fool for swallowing it. But even though we may doubt the sincerity or the judgment of the adulator, the incense is nevertheless acceptable, as it proves we must be of some importance to induce him to take the trouble of flattering us. There are two things that we are all willing to take, and never think we can have too much of (continued Byron) —money and flattery; and the more we have of the *first* the more we are likely to get of the second, as far as I have observed, at all events in England, where I have seen wealth excite an attention and respect that virtue, genius, or valor would fail to meet with.

"I have frequently remarked (said Byron,) that in no country have I seen *preeminence* so universally followed by envy, jealousy, and all uncharitableness, as in England; those who are deterred by shame from openly attacking, endeavor to depreciate it, by holding up mediocrity to admiration, on the same principle that women, when they hear the beauty of another justly extolled, either deny, or assent with faint praise, to her claims, and lavish on some merely passable woman the highest encomiums, to prove they are not en-

vions. The English treat their celebrated men as they do their climate, abuse them amongst themselves, and defend them out of *amour propre*, if attacked by strangers. Did you ever know of a person of powerful abilities really liked in England? Are not the persons most popular in society precisely those who have no qualities to excite envy? Amiable, good-natured people, but negative characters; their very goodness (if mere good-nature can be called goodness) being caused by the want of any positive excellence, as white is produced by the absence of color. People feel themselves equal, and generally think themselves superior to such persons; hence, as they cannot wound vanity, they become popular; all agree to praise them, because *each* individual, while praising, administers to his own self-complacency, from his belief of superiority to him whom he praises. Notwithstanding their faults, the English, (said Byron,) that is to say, the well bred and well educated among them, are better calculated for the commerce of society than the individuals of other countries, from the simple circumstance that they *listen*. This makes one cautious of *what* one says, and prevents the hazarding the *mille petits riens* that escape when one takes courage from the noise of all talking together, as in other places; and this is a great point gained. In what country but England could the epigrammatic repartees and spiritual anecdotes of a Jekyll have flourished? Place him at a French or Italian table, supposing him *au fait* of the languages, and this, our English Attic bee, could neither display his honey nor his sting; both would be useless in the hive of drones around him. St. Evremond, I think it is, who says that there is no better company than an Englishman who talks, and a Frenchman who thinks; but give me the man who *listens*, unless he can talk like a Jekyll, from the overflowing of a full mind, and not, as most of one's acquaintances do, make a noise like drums, from their emptiness. An animated conversation has much the same effect on me as champagne—it elevates and makes me giddy, and I say a thousand foolish things while under its intoxicating influence: it takes a long time to sober me after; and I sink, under reaction, into a state of depression—half cross, half hippish, and out of humor with myself and the world. I find an interesting book the only sedative to restore me to my wonted calm; for, left alone to my own reflections, I feel so ashamed of myself—*vis-à-vis* to myself—for my levity and over excitement, that all the follies I have uttered rise up in judgment against me, and I am as sheepish as a schoolboy, after his first degrading abandonment to intemperance."

"Did you know Curran? (asked Byron) —he was the most wonderful person I ever saw. In him was combined an imagination the most brilliant and profound, with a flexibility and wit that would have justified the observation applied to ——, that his heart was in his head. I remember his once repeating some stanzas to me, four lines of which struck me so much, that I made him repeat them twice, and I wrote them down before I went to bed:

> While Memory with more than Egypt's art
> Embalming all the sorrows of the heart,
> Sits at the altar which she raised to wo,
> And feeds the source whence tears eternal flow!

I have caught myself repeating these lines fifty times; and, strange to say, they suggested an image on memory to me, with which they have no sort of resemblance in any way, and yet the idea came while repeating them; so unaccountable and incomprehensible is the power of association. My thought was—Memory, the mirror which affliction dashes to the earth, and, looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied." He seemed pleased at my admiring his idea.* I told him that his thoughts, in comparison with those of others, were eagles brought into competition with sparrows. As an example, I gave him my definition of memory, which I said resembled a telescope bringing distant objects near to us. He said the simile was good; but I added it was mechanical, instead of poetical, which constituted the difference between excellence and mediocrity, as between the eagle and sparrow. This amused him, though his politeness refused to admit the verity of the comparison.

Talking of tact, Byron observed that it ought to be added to the catalogue of the cardinal virtues, and that our happiness frequently depended more on it than all the accredited ones. "A man (said he) may have prudence, temperance, justice, and fortitude: yet wanting tact may, and must, render those around him *uncomfortable* (the English synonyme for unhappy;) and, by the never-failing retributive jus-

* E'en as a broken mirror which the glass
In every fragment multiplies, and makes
A thousand images of one that was, &c.
Childe Harold, Canto iii. St. 22.

tice of Nemesis, be unhappy himself, as all are who make others so. I consider tact the real *panacea* of life, and have observed that those who most eminently possessed it were remarkable for feeling and sentiment; while, on the contrary, the persons most deficient in it were obtuse, frivolous, or insensible. To possess tact it is necessary to have a fine perception, and to be sensitive; for how can we know what will pain another without having some criterion in our own feelings, by which we can judge of his? Hence, I maintain that our tact is always in proportion to our sensibility."

Talking of love and friendship, Byron said, that "friendship may, and often does, grow into love, but love never subsides into friendship." I maintained the contrary, and instanced the affectionate friendship which replaces the love of married people; a sentiment as tender, though less passionate, and more durable than the first. He said, "You should say more *enduring;* for, depend on it, that the good-natured passiveness, with which people submit to the conjugal yoke, is much more founded on the philosophical principle of what can't be cured must be endured, than the tender friendship you give them credit for. Who that has felt the all-engrossing passion of love (continued he) could support the stagnant calm you refer to for the same object? No, the humiliation of discovering the frailty of our own nature, which is in no instance more proved than by the short duration of violent love, has something so painful in it, that, with our usual selfishness, we feel, if not a repugnance, at least an indifference to the object that once charmed, but can no longer charm us, and whose presence brings mortifying recollections; nay, such is our injustice, that we transfer the blame of the weakness of our own natures to the person who had not power to retain our love, and discover blemishes in her to excuse our inconstancy. As indifference begets indifference, vanity is wounded at both sides; and though good sense may induce people to support and conceal their feelings, how can an affectionate friendship spring up like a phœnix, from the ashes of extinguished passion? I am afraid that the friendship, in such a case, would be as fabulous as the phœnix, for the recollection of burnt-out love would remain too mortifying a memento to admit the successor, friendship." I told Byron that this was mere sophistry, and could not be his real sentiments; as also that, a few days before, he admitted that passion subsided into a better, or at least a more durable feeling. I added, that persons who had felt the engrossing love he described, which was a tempestuous and selfish passion, were glad to sink into the refreshing calm of milder feelings, and looked back with complacency on the storms they had been exposed to, and with increased sympathy to the person who had shared them. The community of interest, of sorrows, and of joys added new links to the chain of affection, and habit, which might wear away the gloss of the selfish passion he alluded to, gave force to friendship, by rendering the persons every day more necessary to each other. I added, that dreadful would be the fate of persons, if, after a few months of violent passion, they were to pass their lives in indifference, merely because their new feelings were less engrossing and exciting than the old. "Then (said Byron,) if you admit that the violent love does, or must, subside in a few months, and, as in coursing, that we are mad for a minute to be melancholy for an hour, would it not be wiser to choose the friend, I mean the person most calculated for friendship, with whom the long years are to be spent, than the idol who is to be worshipped for some months, and then hurled from the altar we had raised to her, and left defaced and disfigured by the smoke of the incense she had received? I maintained that as the idols are chosen nearly always for their personal charms, they are seldom calculated for friendship; hence the disappointment that ensues, when the violence of passion has abated, and the discovery is made that there are no solid qualities to replace the passion that has passed away with the novelty that excited it. When a man chooses a friend in a woman, he looks to her powers of conversation, her mental qualities, and agreeability; and as these win his regard the more they are known, love often takes the place of friendship, and certainly the foundation on which he builds is more likely to be lasting; and, in this case, I admit that affection, or, as you more prettily call it, tender friendship, may last for ever." I replied that I believe the only difference in our opinions is, that I denied that friendship could not succeed love, and that nothing could change my opinion. "I suppose (said Byron) that a woman, like

> A man, convinced against his will,
> Is of the same opinion still—

so that all my fine commentaries on my

text have been useless; at all events, I hope you give me credit for being *ingenious*, as well as *ingenuous* in my defence. Clever men (said Byron) commit a great mistake in selecting wives who are destitute of abilities; I allow that *une femme savante* is apt to be a bore, and it is to avoid this that people run into the opposite extreme, and condemn themselves to pass their lives with women who are incapable of understanding or appreciating them. Men have an idea that a clever woman must be disputative and dictatorial, not considering that it is only pretenders who are either, and that this applies as much to one sex as the other. Now, my *beau idéal* would be a woman with talent enough to be able to understand and value mine, but not sufficient to be able to shine herself. All men with pretensions desire this, though few, if any, have courage to avow it: I believe the truth is, that a man must be very conscious of superior abilities to endure the thought of having a rival near the throne, though that rival was his wife; and as it is said that no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre, it may be concluded that few men can retain their position on the pedestal of genius *vis-à-vis* to one who has been behind the curtain, unless that one is unskilled in the art of judging, and consequently admires the more because she does not understand. Genius, like greatness, should be seen at a distance, for neither will bear a too close inspection. Imagine the hero of a hundred fights in his cotton night-cap, subject to all the infirmities of human nature, and there is an end of his sublimity; and see a poet whose works have raised our thoughts above this sphere of common every-day existence, and who, Prometheus-like, has stolen fire from heaven to animate the children of clay—see him in the throes of poetic labor, blotting, tearing, re-writing the lines that we suppose him to have poured forth with Homeric inspiration, and, in the intervals, eating, drinking and sleeping, like the most ordinary mortal, and he soon sinks to a level with them in our estimation. I am sure (said Byron) we can never justly appreciate the works of those with whom we have lived on familiar terms. I have felt this myself, and it applies to poets more than all other writers. They should live in solitude, rendering their presence more desired by its rarity; never submit to the gratification of the animal appetite of eating in company, and be as distinct in their general habits, as in their genius, from the common herd of mankind." He laughed heartily when he had finished this speech, and added, "I have had serious thoughts of drawing up a little code of instructions for my brethren of the craft. I don't think my friend Moore would adopt it, and he, perhaps, is the only exception who would be privileged to adhere to his present regime, as he can certainly pass the ordeal of dinners without losing any of his poetical reputation, since the brilliant things that come from his lips reconcile one to the solid things that go into them."

"We have had 'Pleasures of Hope,' 'Pleasures of Memory,' 'Pleasures of Imagination,' and 'Pleasures of Love.' I wonder that no one has thought of writing Pleasures of Fear (said Byron.) It surely is a poetical subject, and much might be made of it in good hands." I answered, "Why do you not undertake it?" He replied, "Why, I have endeavored through life to make believe that I am unacquainted with the passion, so I must not now show an intimacy with it, lest I be accused of cowardice which is, I believe, the only charge that has not yet been brought against me. But, joking apart, it would be a fine subject, and has more of the true sublime than any of the other passions. I have always found more difficulty in hitting on a subject than in filling it up, and so I dare say do most people; and I have remarked that I never could make much of a subject suggested to me by another. I have sometimes dreamt of subjects and incidents (continued he,) nay nearly filled up an outline of a tale while under the influence of sleep, but have found it too wild to work up into any thing. Dreams are strange things, and here, again, is one of the incomprehensibilities of nature. I could tell you extraordinary things of dreams, and as true as extraordinary, but you would laugh at my superstition. Mine are always troubled and disagreeable; and one of the most fearful thoughts that ever crossed my mind during moments of gloomy scepticism, has been the possibility that the *last* sleep may not be dreamless. Fancy an endless dream of horror—it is too dreadful to think of—this thought alone would lead the veriest clod of animated clay that ever existed to aspirations after immortality. The difference between a religious and irreligious man (said Byron) is, that the one sacrifices the present to the future; and the other, the future to the present." I observed, that grovelling must be the mind that can content itself with the *present;* even those

who are occupied only with their pleasures find the insufficiency of it, and must have something to look forward to in the morrow of the future, so unsatisfying is to-day of the present! Byron said that he agreed with me, and added, "The belief in the immortality of the soul is the only true panacea for the ills of life."

"You will like the Italian women (said Byron,) and I advise you to cultivate their acquaintance. They are natural, frank and good-natured, and have none of the affectation, petitesse, jealousy and malice, that characterise our more polished countrywomen. This gives a raciness to their ideas as well as manners, that to me is peculiarly pleasing; and I feel with an Italian woman as if she was a full-grown child, possessing the buoyancy and playfulness of infancy with the deep feeling of womanhood; none of that conventional *manièrisme* that one meets with from the first patrician circles in England, justly styled the marble age, so cold and polished, to the second and third coteries, where a coarse caricature is given of the unpenetrated and *impenetrable* mysteries of the *first*. Where dulness, supported by the *many*, silences talent and originality, upheld by the few. Madame de Staël used to say that our great balls and assemblies of hundreds in London, to which all flocked, were admirably calculated to reduce all to the same level, and were got up with this intention. In the torrid zone of suffocating hundreds, mediocrity and excellence had equal chances, for neither could be remarked or distinguished; conversation was impracticable, reflection put *hors de combat*, and common sense by universal accord, sent to Coventry; so that after a season in London one doubted one's own identity, and was tempted to repeat the lines in the child's book, 'If I be not I, who can I be?' So completely were one's faculties reduced to the conventional standard. The Italians know not this artificial state of society; their circles are limited and social; they love or hate; but then they 'do their hating gently;' the clever among them are allowed a distinguished place; the less endowed admires, instead of depreciating, what he cannot attain; and all and each contribute to the general stock of happiness. Misanthropy is unknown in Italy, as are many of the other exotic passions, forced into flower by the hot-beds of civilisation; and yet in *moral* England you will hear people express their horror of the freedom and immorality of the Italians, whose errors are but as the weeds that a too warm sun brings forth, while ours are the stinging-nettles of a soil rendered rank by its too great richness. Nature is all-powerful in Italy, and who is it that would not prefer the sins of her exuberance to the crimes of art? Lay aside ceremony, and meet them with their own warmth and frankness, and I answer for it you will leave those whom you sought as acquaintances, friends, instead of, as in England, scarcely retaining as acquaintances those with whom you had started in life as friends. Who ever saw in Italy the nearest and dearest relations bursting asunder all the ties of consanguinity, from some worldly and interested motive? And yet this so frequently takes place in England, that, after an absence of a year or two, one dare hardly inquire of a sister after a sister, or a brother after a brother, as one is afraid to be told—not that they are dead—but that they have cut each other."

"I ought to be an excellent comic writer (said Byron,) if it be true, as some assert, that melancholy people succeed best in comedy, and gay people in tragedy; and Moore would make, by that rule, a first-rate tragic writer. I have known, among amateur authors, some of the gayest persons, whose compositions were all of a melancholy turn; and for myself, some of my nearest approaches to comic have been written under a deep depression of spirits. This is strange, but so is all that appertains to our strange natures; and the more we analyze the anomalies in ourselves or others, the more incomprehensible they appear. I believe (continued Byron) the less we reflect on them the better, at least I am sure those that reflect the least are the happiest. I once heard a clever medical man say, that if a person were to occupy himself a certain time in counting the pulsations of his heart, it would have the effect of accelerating its movements, and, if continued, would produce disease. So it is with the mind and nature of man; our examinations and reflections lead to no definite conclusions; and often engender a morbid state of feeling, that increases the anomalies for which we sought to account. We know that we live (continued Byron,) and to live and to suffer are in my opinion synonymous. We know also that we shall die, though the how, the when, and the where, we are ignorant of; the whole knowledge of man can pierce no farther, and centuries revolving on centuries have made us no wiser, I think it was Luther who said that the human mind was like a

drunken man on horseback—prop it on one side and it falls on the other: who that has entered into the recesses of his own mind, or examined all that is exposed in the minds of others, but must have discovered this tendency to weakness, which is generally in proportion to the strength in some other faculty. Great imagination is seldom accompanied by equal powers of reason, and *vice versâ*, so that we rarely possess superiority in any one point, except at the expense of another. It is surely then unjust (continued Byron laughing,) to render poets responsible for their want of common sense; since it is only by the excess of imagination they can arrive at being poets, and this excess debars reason; indeed the very circumstance of a man's yielding to the vocation of a poet ought to serve as a voucher that he is no longer of sound mind."

Byron always became gay when any subject afforded him an opportunity of ridiculing poets; he entered into it *con amore*, and generally ended by some sarcasm on the profession, or on himself. He has often said, "We of the craft are all crazy, but *I* more than the rest; some are affected by gaiety, others by melancholy, but all are more or less touched, though few except myself have the candor to avow it, which I do to spare my friends the pain of sending it forth to the world. This very candor is another proof that I am not of sound mind (continued he), for people will be sure to say how far gone he must be, when he admits it; on the principle that when a belle or beau owns to thirty-five, the world gives them credit for at least seven years more, from the belief that if we seldom speak the truth of others, we never do of ourselves, at least on subjects of personal interest or vanity."

Talking of an acquaintance, Byron said, —look at ——, and see how he gets on in the world—he is as unwilling to do a bad action as he is incapable of doing a good: fear prevents the first, and *méchanceté* the second. The difference between —— and me is, that I abuse many, and really, with one or two exceptions, (and mind you, *they are males*,) hate none; and he abuses none, and hates many, if not all. Fancy —in the Palace of Truth, what good fun it would be, to hear him, while he believed himself uttering the most honied compliments, giving vent to all the spite and rancor that has been pent up in his mind for years, and then to see the person he has been so long flattering hearing his real sentiments for the first time: this would be rare fun! Now, I would appear to great advantage in the Palace of Truth," continued Byron, "though you look ill-naturedly incredulous; for while I thought I was vexing friends and foes with spiteful speeches, I should be saying good-natured things, for, *au fond*, I have no malice, at least none that lasts beyond the moment." Never was there a more true observation: Byron's is a fine nature, spite of all the weeds that have sprung up in it; and I am convinced that it is the excellence of the poet, or rather let me say, the effect of that excellence, that has produced the defects of the man. In proportion to the admiration one has excited, has been the severity of the censure bestowed on the other, and often most unjustly. The world has burnt incense before the poet, and heaped ashes on the head of the man. This has revolted and driven him out of the pale of social life: his wounded pride has avenged itself, by painting his own portrait in the most sombre colors, as if to give a still darker picture than has yet been drawn by his foes, while glorying in forcing even from his foes an admiration as unbounded for his genius as has been their disapprobation for his character. Had his errors met with more mercy, he might have been a less grand poet, but he would have been a more estimable man; the good that is now dormant in his nature would have been called forth, and the evil would not have been excited. The blast that withers the rose destroys not its thorns, which often remain, the sole remembrance of the flower they grow near; and so it is with some of our finest qualities—blighted by unkindness, we can only trace them by the faults their destruction has made visible.

Lord Byron, in talking of his friend, La Comte Pietro Gamba, (the brother of La Countessa Guicciola,) whom he had presented to us soon after our arrival at Genoa remarked, that he was one of the most amiable, brave, and excellent young men, he had ever encountered, with a thirst for knowledge, and a disinterestedness rarely to be met with. "He is my grand *point d'appui* for Greece," said he, "as I know he will neither deceive nor flatter me." We have found La Comte Pietro Gamba exactly what Lord Byron had described him; sensible, mild, and amiable, devotedly attached to Lord B., and dreaming of glory and Greece. He is extremely good-looking, and Lord Byron told us he resembled his sister very much, which I dare say increased his partiality for him not a little.

Habit has a strong influence over Byron: he likes routine, and detests what he calls being put out of his way. He told me that any infringement on his habitual way of living, or passing his time, annoyed him. Talking of thin women, he said that if they were young and pretty, they reminded him of dried butterflies; but if neither, of spiders, whose nests would never catch him were he a fly, as they had nothing tempting. A new book is a treasure to him, provided it is really new; for having read more than perhaps any man of his age, he can immediately discover a want of originality, and throws by the book in disgust at the first wilful plagiary he detects.

Talking of Mr. Ward,* Lord Byron said —" Ward is one of the best-informed men I know, and, in a *tête-à-tête*, is one of the most agreeable companions. He has great originality, and, being *tres distrait*, it adds to the piquancy of his observations, which are sometimes somewhat *trop naïveté*, though always amusing. This *naïveté* of his is the more piquant from his being really a good-natured man, who unconsciously thinks aloud. Interest Ward on a subject, and I know no one who can talk better. His expressions are concise without being poor, and terse and epigrammatic without being affected. He can compress (continued Byron) as much into a few words as any one I know; and if he gave *more* of his attentions to his associates, and *less* to himself, he would be one of the few whom one could praise, without being compelled to use the conjunction *but*. Ward has bad health, and unfortunately, like all valetudinarians, it occupies his attion too much, which will probably bring on a worse state," continued Byron, " that of confirmed egoism—a malady that, though not to be found in the catalogue of ailments to which man is subject, yet perhaps is more to be dreaded than all that are."

I observed that egoism is in general the malady of the aged; and that, it appears, we become occupied with our own existence in proportion as it ceases to be interesting to others.

" Yes," said Byron, " on the same principle as we see the plainest people the vainest—nature giving them vanity and self-love to supply the want of that admiration they never can find in others. I can therefore pity and forgive the vanity of the ugly and deformed, whose sole consolation it is; but the handsome, whose good looks are mirrored in the eyes of all around them, should be content with that, and not indulge in such egregious vanity as they give way to in general. But to return to Ward," said Byron, " and this is not *apropos* to vanity, for I never saw any one who has less. He is not properly appreciated in England. The English can better understand and enjoy the *bon mots* of a *bon vivant*, who can at all times set the table in a roar, than the neat *répliques* of Ward, which, exciting reflection, are more likely to silence the rabble-riot of intemperance. They like better the person who makes them laugh, though often at their own expense, than he who forces them to think—an operation which the mental faculties of few of them are calculated to perform: so that poor Ward, finding himself undervalued, sinks into self, and this, at the long run, is dangerous:—

> For well we know the mind, too finely wrought,
> Preys on itself, and is o'erpower'd by thought.

" There are many men in England of superior abilities, (continued Byron,) who are lost from the habits and inferiority of their associates. Such men, finding that they cannot raise their companions to their level, are but too apt to let themselves down to that of the persons they live with; and hence many a man condescends to be merely a wit, and man of pleasure, who was born for better things. Poor Sheridan often played his character in society; but he maintained his superiority over the herd, by having established a literary and political reputation; and as I have heard him more than once say, when his jokes have drawn down plaudits from companions, to whom, of an evening at least, sobriety and sadness were alike unknown—' It is some consolation, that if I set the table in a roar, I can at pleasure set the senate in a roar;' and this was muttered while under the influence of wine, and as if apologising to his own mind for the profanation it was evident he felt he had offered to it at the moment. Lord A—ley is a delightful companion, (said Byron,) brilliant, witty, and playful; he can be irresistibly comic when he pleases, but what could he not be if he pleased? for he has talents to be any thing. I lose patience when I see such a man throw himself away; for there are plenty of men, who could be witty, brilliant, and comic, but who could be nothing else, while he is all these, but could be much more. How many men have made a figure in public life, without half his abilities!

* Now Lord Dudley.

But indolence and the love of pleasure will be the bane of A——y, as it has been of many a man of talent before."

The more I see of Byron the more am I convinced that all he says and does should be judged more leniently than the sayings and doings of others—as his proceed from the impulse of the moment, and never from premeditated malice. He cannot resist expressing whatever comes into his mind; and the least shade of the ridiculous is seized by him at a glance, and portrayed with a facility and a felicity that must encourage the propensity to ridicule, which is inherent in him. All the malice of his nature has lodged itself on his lips and the fingers of his right hand—for there is none I am persuaded to be found in his heart, which has more of good than most people give him credit for, except those who have lived with him on habits of intimacy. He enters into society as children do their play-ground, for relaxation and amusement, after his mind has been strained to its utmost stretch, and that he feels the necessity of unbending it. Ridicule is his play; it amuses him perhaps the more that he sees it amuses others, and much of its severity is mitigated by the boyish glee, and laughing sportiveness, with which his sallies are uttered. All this is felt when he is conversing, but unfortunately it cannot be conveyed to the reader: the narrator would therefore deprecate the censure his sarcasms may excite in the memory of the smiles and gaiety that palliated them when spoken.

Byron is fond of talking of Napoleon; and told me that his admiration of him had much increased since he had been in Italy, and witnessed the stupendous works he had planned and executed. "To pass through Italy without thinking of Napoleon, (said he,) is like visiting Naples without looking at Vesuvius." Seeing me smile at the comparison, he added—"Though the works of one are indestructible, and the other destructive, still one is continually reminded of the power of both." "And yet (said I) there are days, that, like all your other favorites, Napoleon does not escape censure." "That may be, (said Byron,) but I find fault, and quarrel with Napoleon, as a lover does with the trifling faults of his mistress, from excessive liking, which tempts me to desire that he had been all faultless; and, like the lover, I return with renewed fondness after each quarrel. Napoleon (continued Byron) was a grand creature, and though he was hurled from his pedestal, after having made thrones his footstool, his memory still remains, like the colossal statue of the Memnon, though cast down from its seat of honor, still bearing the ineffaceable traces of grandeur and sublimity, to astonish future ages. When Metternich (continued Byron) was depreciating the genius of Napoleon, in a circle at Vienna where his word was a law and his nod a decree, he appealed to John William Ward, if Bonaparte had not been greatly overrated.—Ward's answer was as courageous as admirable. He replied, that 'Napoleon had rendered past glory doubtful, and future fame impossible." This was expressed in French, and such pure French, that all present were struck with admiration, no less with the thought than with the mode of expressing it." I told Byron that this reminded me of a reply made by Mr. Ward to a lady at Vienna, who somewhat rudely remarked to him, that it was strange that all the best society at Vienna spoke French as well as German, while the English scarcely spoke French at all, or spoke it ill. Ward answered, that the English must be excused for their want of practice, as the French army had not been twice to London to teach them, as they had been at Vienna. "The coolness of Ward's manner (said Byron) must have lent force to such a reply: I have heard him say many things worth remembering, and the neatness of their expression was as remarkable as the justness of the thought. It is a pity (continued Byron) that Ward has not written any thing: his style, judging by letters of his that I have seen, is admirable, and reminded me of Sallust."

Having, one day, taken the liberty of (what he termed) scolding Lord Byron, and finding him take it with his usual good-nature, I observed that I was agreeably surprised by the patience with which he listened to my lectures; he smiled, and replied, "No man dislikes being lectured by a woman, provided she be not his mother, sister, wife, or mistress: first, it implies that she takes an interest in him, and, secondly, that she does not think him irreclaimable: then, there is not that air of superiority in women when they give advice, that men, particularly one's contemporaries, affect; and even if there was, men think their own superiority so acknowledged, that they listen without humiliation to the *gentler*, I don't say weaker, sex. There is one exception, however, for I confess I could not stand being lectured by Lady ——; but then she is neither of the weak nor gentle sex—she is a nondescript—

having all the faults of both sexes, without the virtues of either. Two lines in the 'Henriade,' describing Catherine de Medicis, seem made for Lady —— (continued Byron)—

> Possédant en un mot, pour n'en pas dire plus,
> Les défauts de son sexe et peu de ses vertus."

I remember only one instance of Byron's being displeased with my frankness. We were returning on horseback from Nervi, and in defending a friend of mine, whom he assailed with all the slings and arrows of ridicule and sarcasm, I was obliged to be more severe than usual; and having at that moment arrived at the turn of the road that led to Albaro, he politely, but coldly, wished me good bye, and galloped off. We had scarcely advanced a hundred yards, when he came galloping after us, and reaching out his hand, said to me, "Come, come, give me your hand, I cannot bear that we should part so formally: I am sure what you have said was right, and meant for my good; so God bless you, and to-morrow we shall ride again, and I promise to say nothing that can produce a lesson." We all agreed that we had never seen Byron appear to so much advantage. He gives me the idea of being the man the most easily to be managed I ever saw: I wish Lady Byron had discovered the means, and both might now be happier.

Lord Byron told me that La Contessa Guiccioli had repeatedly asked him to discontinue Don Juan, as its immorality shocked her, and that she could not bear that any thing of the kind should be written under the same roof with her. "To please her (said Byron) I gave it up for some time, and have only got permission to continue it on condition of making my hero a more moral person. I shall end by making him turn Methodist; this will please the English, and be an *amende honorable* for his sins and mine. I once got an anonymous letter, written in a very beautiful female hand (said Byron,) on the subject of Don Juan, with a beautiful illustrative drawing, beneath which was written—'When Byron wrote the first Canto of Don Juan, Love, that had often guided his pen, resigned it to sensuality—and Modesty, covering her face with her veil, to hide her blushes and dry her tears, fled from him for ever.' The drawing (continued Byron) represented Love and Modesty turning their backs on wicked Me—and Sensuality, a fat, flushed, wingless Cupid, presenting me with a pen. Was not this a pretty conceit? At all events, it is some consolation to occupy the attention of women so much, though it is but by my faults; and I confess it gratifies me. Apropos to Cupid—it is strange (said Byron) that the ancients, in their mythology, should represent Wisdom by a Woman, and Love by a boy! how do you account for this? I confess I have little faith in Minerva, and think that Wisdom is, perhaps, the last attribute I should be inclined to give woman; but then I do allow, that love would be more suitably represented by a female than a male; for men or boys feel not the passion with the delicacy and purity that women do; and this is my real opinion, which must be my peace-offering for doubting the wisdom of your sex."

Byron is infirm of purpose—decides without reflection—and gives up his plans if they are opposed for any length of time; but, as far as I can judge of him, though he yields, he does it not with a good grace: he is a man likely to show that such a sacrifice of self-will was offered up more through indolence than affection, so that his yielding can seldom be quite satisfactory, at least to a delicate mind. He says that all women are *exigéante*, and apt to be dissatisfied: he is, as I have told him, too selfish and indolent not to have given those who had more than a common interest in him cause to be so. It is such men as Byron who complain of women; they touch not the chords that give sweet music in woman's breast, but strike—with a bold and careless hand—those that jar and send forth discord. Byron has a false notion on the subject of women; he fancies that they are all disposed to be tyrants, and that the moment they know their power they abuse it. We have had many arguments on this point—I maintaining that the more disposed men were to yield to the empire of woman, the less were they inclined to exact, as submission disarmed, and attention and affection enslaved them.

Men are capable of making great sacrifices, who are not willing to make the lesser ones, on which so much of the happiness of life depends. The great sacrifices are seldom called for, but the minor ones are in daily requisition; and the making them with cheerfulness and grace enhances their value, and banishes from the domestic circle the various misunderstandings, discussions, and coldnesses, that arise to embitter existence, where a little self-denial might have kept them off.

Woman is a creature of feeling—easily wounded, but susceptible of all the soft and kind emotions: destroy this sensitiveness, and you rob her of her greatest attraction: study her happiness, and you insure your own.

"One of the things that most pleases me in the Italian character (said Byron) is the total absence of that belief which exists so generally in England in the mind of each individual that the circle in which he lives and which he dignifies by calling *The World*, is occupied with him and his actions—an idea founded on the extreme vanity that characterises the English, and precludes the possibility of living for oneself or those immediately around one. How many of my *soi-disant* friends in England are dupes to this vanity (continued Byron)—keeping up expensive establishments which they can ill afford—living in crowds; and with people who do not suit them—feeling *ennuyés* day after day, and yet submitting to all this tiresome routine of vapid reunions—living, during the fashionable season, if living it can be called, in a state of intermitting fever, for the sake of being considered to belong to a certain set. During the time I passed in London, I always remarked that I never met a person who did not tell me how bored he or she had been the day or night before at Lady This or Lady That's; and when I've asked 'Why do you go if it bores you?' the invariable answer has been —'One can't help going; it would be so odd not to go.' Old and young, ugly and handsome, all have the rage in England of losing their identity in crowds; and prefer conjugating the verb *ennuyer en masse;* in heated rooms, to conning it over it in privacy in a purer atmosphere. The constancy and perseverance with which our compatriots support fashionable life have always been to me a subject of wonder, if not of admiration, and proves what they might be capable of in a good cause. I am curious to know (continued Byron) if the rising generation will fall into the same inane routine; though it is to be hoped the march of intellect will have some influence in establishng something like society, which has hitherto been only to be found in country-houses. I spent a week at Lady J——y's once, and very agreeably it passed; the guests were well chosen—the host and hostess on 'hospitable thoughts intent' —the establishment combining all the luxury of a *maison montée en prince* with the ease and comfort of a well-ordered home. How different do the same people appear in London and in the country!—they are hardly to be recognised. In the latter they are as natural and unaffected as they are insipid or over-excited in the former. A certain place (continued Byron) not to be named to 'ears polite,' is said to be paved with good intentions, and London (viewing the effect it produces on its fashionable inhabitants) may really be supposed to be paved by evil passions, as few can touch its *pavé* without contamination. I have been reading Lord John Russell's Essays on London Society, and find them clever and amusing (said Byron) but too microscopic for my taste: he has, however, treated the subject with a lightness and playfulness best suited to it, and his reflections show an accuracy of observation that proves he is capable of better things. He who would take a just view of the world must neither examine it through a microscope nor a magnifying-glass. Lord John is a sensible and amiable man, and bids fair to distinguish himself.

"Do you know Hallam? (said Byron.) Of course I need not ask if you have read his 'Middle Ages:' it is an admirable work, full of research, and does Hallam honor. I know no one capable of having written it except him; for, admitting that a writer could be found who could bring to the task his knowledge and talents, it would be difficult to find one who united to these his research, patience, and perspicuity of style. The reflections of Hallam are at once just and profound—his language well chosen and impressive. I remember (continued Byron) being struck by a passage, where, touching on the Venetians, he writes—'Too blind to avert danger, too cowardly to withstand it, the most ancient government of Europe made not an instant's resistance: the peasants of Underwald died upon their mountains—the nobles of Venice clung only to their lives.' This is the style in which history ought to be written, if it is wished to impress it on the memory; and I found myself, on my first perusal of the 'Middle Ages,' repeating aloud many such passages as the one I have cited, they struck my fancy so much. Robertson's State of Europe, in his 'Charles the Fifth" is another of my great favorites (continued Byron;) it contains an epitome of information. Such works do more towards the extension of knowledge than half the ponderous tomes that lumber up our libraries: they are the rail-roads to learning; while the others are the neglected old roads that deter us from attempting the journey.

"It is strange (said Byron) that we are in general much more influenced by the opinions of those whose sentiments ought to be a matter of indifference to us, than by that of near or dear friends; nay, we often do things totally opposed to the opinions of the latter (on whom much if not all, our comfort depends,) to cultivate that of the former, who are or can be nothing in the scale of our happiness. It is in this opposition between our conduct and our affections that much of our troubles originates; it loosens the bonds of affection between us and those we ought to please, and fails to excite any goodwill in those whom our vanity leads us to wish to propitiate, because they are regardless of us and of our actions. With all our selfishness, this is a great mistake (continued Byron;) for, as I take it for granted we have all some feelings of natural affection for our kindred or friends, and consequently wish to retain theirs; we never wound or offend them without its re-acting on ourselves, by alienating them from us: hence *selfishness* ought to make us study the wishes of those to whom we look for happiness; and the principle of doing as you would be done by, a principle which if acted upon, could not fail to add to the stock of general good, was founded in wisdom and knowledge of the selfishness of human nature."

Talking of Mr. D. K——, Byron said, "My friend Dug is a proof that a good heart cannot compensate for an irritable temper: whenever he is named, people dwell on the last and pass over the first; and yet he really has an excellent heart, and a sound head, of which I, in common with many others of his friends, have various proofs. He is clever too, and well informed, and I do think would have made a figure in the world, were it not for his temper, which gives a dictatorial tone to his manner, that is offensive to the *amour propre* of those with whom he mixes; and when you alarm that (said Byron,) there is an end of your influence. By tacitly admitting the claims of vanity of others, you make at least acquiescent beholders of your own, and this is something gained; for, depend on it, disguise it how we will, vanity is the prime mover in most, if not all, of us, and some of the actions and works that have the most excited our admiration have been inspired by this passion, that *none* will own to, yet that influences *all*.

"The great difference between the happy and unhappy (said Byron,) is that the former are afraid to contemplate death, and the latter look forward to it as a release from suffering. Now as death is inevitable, and life brief and uncertain, unhappiness, viewed in this point, is rather desirable than otherwise; but few, I fear, derive consolation from the reflection. I think of death often (continued Byron,) as I believe do most people who are not happy, and view it as a refuge 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' There is something calm and soothing to me in the thought of death; and the only time that I feel a repugnance to it is on a fine day, in solitude, in a beautiful country, when all nature seems rejoicing in light and life. The contrast then between the beautiful and animated world around me, and the dark narrow grave, gives a chill to the feelings; for, with all the boasted philosophy of man, his physical *being* influences his notions of that state where they can be felt no more. The nailed down coffin, and the dark gloomy vault, or grave, always mingle with our thoughts of death; then the decomposition of our mortal frames, the being preyed on by reptiles, add to the disgusting horror of the picture, and one has need of all the hopes of immortality to enable one to pass over this bridge between the life we know and the life we hope to find.

"Do you know (said Byron) that when I have looked on some face that I love, imagination has often figured the changes that death must one day produce on it—the worm rioting on lips now smiling, the features and hues of health changed to the livid and ghastly tints of putrefaction; and the image conjured up to my fancy, but which is as true as it is a fearful anticipation of what *must* arrive, has left an impression for hours that the actual presence of the object, in all the bloom of health, has not been able to banish: this is one of *my* pleasures of imagination."

Talking of hypochondriasm, Byron said, that the world had little compassion for two of the most serious ills that human nature is subject to—mental or bodily hypochondriasm: "Real ailments may be cured, (said he,) but imaginary ones, either moral or physical, admit of no remedy. People analyse the supposed causes of maladies of the mind; and if the sufferer be rich, well born, well looking, and clever in any way, they conclude he, or she, can have no cause for unhappiness; nay, assign the cleverness, which is often the source of unhappiness, as

among the adventitious gifts that increase or ought to increase, the felicity, and pity not the unhappiness they cannot understand. They take the same view of imaginary physical ailments, never reflecting that 'happiness (or health) is often but in opinion;' and that he who believes himself wretched or ill suffers perhaps more than he who has real cause for wretchedness, or who is laboring under disease with less acute sensibility to feel his troubles, and nerves subdued by ill health, which prevents his suffering from bodily ills as severely as does the hypochondriac from imaginary ones. The irritability of genius (continued Lord Byron) is nothing more or less than a delicacy of organisation, which gives a susceptibility to impressions to which coarser minds are never subject, and cultivation and refinement but increases it, until the unhappy victim becomes a prey to mental hypochondriasm."

Byron furnished a melancholy illustration of the fate of genius; and while he dwelt on the diseases to which it is subject, I looked at his fine features, already marked by premature age, and his face "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and stamped with decay, until I felt that *his* was no hypothetical statement. Alas!—

> Noblest minds
> Sink soonest into ruin, like a tree
> That, with the weight of its own golden fruitage,
> Is bent down to the dust.

"Do you know Mackintosh? (asked Lord Byron)—his is a mind of powerful calibre. Madame de Staël used to extol him to the skies, and was perfectly sincere in her admiration of him, which was not the case with all whom she praised. Mackintosh also praised her: but his is a mind that, as Moore writes, 'rather loves to praise than blame;' for, with a judgment so comprehensive, a knowledge so general, and a critical acumen rarely to be met with, his sentences are never severe. He is a powerful writer and speaker; there is an earnestness and vigor in his style, and a force and purity in his language, equally free from inflation and loquacity. Lord Erskine is, I know, a friend of yours (continued Byron,) and a most gifted person he is. The Scotch are certainly very superior people; with intellects naturally more acute than the English, they are better educated and make better men of business. Erskine is full of imagination, and in this he resembles your countrymen, the Irish, more than the Scotch. The Irish would make better poets, and the Scotch philosophers; but this excess of imagination gives a redundancy to the writings and speeches of the Irish that I object to: they come down on one with similes, tropes, and metaphors, a superabundance of riches that makes one long for a little plain matter-of-fact. An Irishman, of course I mean a clever one, (continued Byron,) educated in Scotland, would be perfection, for the Scots professors would prune down the over-luxuriant shoots of his imagination, and strengthen his reasoning powers. I hope you are not very much offended with me for this critique on your countrymen (continued Byron); but, *en revanche*, I give you *carte blanche* to attack mine, as much as you please, and will join in your strictures to the utmost extent to which you wish to go. Lord Erskine is, or was, (said Byron,) for I suppose age has not improved him more than it generally does people—the most brilliant person imaginable—quick, vivacious, and sparkling, he spoke so well that I never felt tired of listening to him, even when he abandoned himself to that subject of which all his other friends and acquaintances expressed themselves so fatigued—*self*. His egotism was remarkable, but there was a *bonhommie* in it that showed he had a better opinion of mankind than they deserved; for it implied a belief that his listeners could be interested in what concerned him, whom they professed to like. He was deceived in this (continued Byron,) as are all who have a favorable opinion of their fellow-men: in society all and each are occupied with self, and can rarely pardon any one who presumes to draw their attention to other subjects for any length of time. Erskine had been a great man, and he knew it; and in talking so continually of self, imagined that he was but the echo of fame. All his talents, wit, and brilliancy were insufficient to excuse this weakness in the opinion of his friends; and I have seen bores, acknowledged bores, turn from this clever man, with every symptom of *ennui*, when he has been reciting an interesting anecdote, merely because he was the principal actor in it.

"This fastidiousness of the English," continued Byron, "and habit of pronouncing people bores, often impose on strangers and stupid people, who conceive that it arises from delicacy of taste and superior abilities. I never was taken in by it, for I have generally found that those who

were the most ready to pronounce others bores, had the most indisputable claims to that title in their own persons. The truth is," continued Byron, "the English are very envious, they are *au fond*, conscious that they are dreadfully dull—being loquacious without liveliness, proud without dignity, and *brusque* without sincerity; they never forgive those who show that they have made the same discovery, or who occupy public attention, of which they are jealous. An Englishman rarely condescends to take the trouble of conciliating admiration (though he is jealous of esteem), and he as rarely pardons those who have succeeded in attaining it. They are jealous," continued Byron, "of popularity of every sort, and not only depreciate the talents that obtain it, whatever they may be, but the person who possesses them. I have seen in London, in one of the circles the most *récherche*, a literary man *a la mode* universally attacked by the *élite* of the party, who were damning his merits with faint praise, and drawing his defects into notice, until some other candidate for approbation as a conversationist, a singer, or even a dancer, was named, when all fell upon him—proving that a superiority of tongue, voice, or heel was as little to be pardoned as genius or talent. I have known people," continued Byron, "talk of the highest efforts of genius as if they had been within the reach of each of the common-place individuals of the circle; and comment on the acute reasonings of some logician as if they could have made the same deductions from the same premises, though ignorant of the most simple syllogism. Their very ignorance of the subjects on which they pronounce is perhaps the cause of the fearless decisions they give, for knowing nought, they think every thing easy: but this impertinence," continued Byron, "is difficult to be borne by those who know 'how painful 'tis to climb,' and who having, by labor, gained some one of the eminences in literature—which, alas! as we all know, are but as mole-hills compared to the acclivity they aim at ascending—are the more deeply impressed with the difficulties that they have yet to surmount. I have never yet been satisfied with any one of my own productions; I cannot read them over without detecting a thousand faults; but when I read critiques upon them by those who could *not* have written them I lose my patience.

"There is an old and stupid song," said Byron, "that says—'Friendship with woman is sister to love.' There is some truth in this; for let a man form a friendship with a woman, even though she be no longer young or handsome, there is a softness and tenderness attached to it that no male friendship can know. A proof of this is, that Lady M——, who might have been my mother, excited an interest in my feelings that few young women have been able to awaken. She was a charming person—a sort of modern Aspasia, uniting the energy of a man's mind with the delicacy and tenderness of a woman's. She wrote and spoke admirably, because she felt admirably. Envy, malice, hatred, or uncharitableness, found no place in her feelings. She had all of philosophy, save its moroseness, and all of nature, save its defects and general *faiblesse;* or if some portion of *faiblesse* attached to her, it only served to render her more forbearing to the errors of others. I have often thought, that, with a little more youth, Lady M—— might have turned my head, at all events she often turned my heart, by bringing me back to mild feelings, when the demon passion was strong within me. Her mind and heart were as fresh as if only sixteen summers had flown over her, instead of four times that number: and the mind and heart always leave external marks of their state of health. Goodness is the best cosmetic that has yet been discovered, for I am of opinion that, not according to our friend Moore—

> As the shining casket's worn
> The gem within will tarnish too,—

but, *au contraire*, the decay of the gem will tarnish the casket—the sword will wear away the scabbard. Then how rare is it to see age give its experience without its hardness of heart! and this was Lady M——'s case. She was a captivating creature, *malgré* her eleven or twelve lustres, and I shall always love her.

"Did you know William Spencer, the Poet of Society, as they used to call him?" said Byron. "His was really what your countrymen call an elegant mind, polished, graceful, and sentimental, with just enough gaiety to prevent his being lachrymose, and enough sentiment to prevent his being too anacreontic. There was a great deal of genuine fun in Spencer's conversation, as well as a great deal of refined sentiment in his verses. I liked both, for both were perfectly aristocratic in their way; neither one nor the other was calculated to please the *canaille*, which made me like them all the better. England was, after all I may say against it, very delightful in my days; that is to say, there were some six or

seven very delightful people among the hundred common-place that one saw every day—seven stars, the pleiades, visible when all others had hid their diminished heads; and look where we may, where can we find so many stars united elsewhere? Moore, Campbell, Rogers, Spencer, as poets; and how many conversationists to be added to the galaxy of stars,—one set irradiating our libraries of a morning, and the other illuminating our dining-rooms of an evening! All this was, and would be, very delightful, could you have confined the stars within their own planets; but, alas! they were given to wander into other spheres, and often set in the arctic circles, the frozen zones of nobility. I often thought at that time," continued Byron, "that England had reached the pinnacle—that point where, as no advance can be made, a nation must retrograde—and I don't think I was wrong. Our army had arrived at a state of perfection before unknown; Wellington's star was in the ascendant, and all others paled before its influence. We had Grey, Grenville, Wellesley, and Holland in the House of Peers, and Sheridan, Canning, Burdett, and Tierney in the Commons. In society we were rich in poets, then in their zenith, now alas! fallen into the sear and yellow leaf: and in wits of whom one did not speak in the past tense. Of these, those whom the destroyer Time has not cut off he has mutilated; the wine of their lives has turned sour—and lost its body, and who is there to supply their places? The march of intellect has been preceded by pioneers, who have levelled all the eminences of distinction, and reduced all to the level of decent mediocrity.

"It is said that as people grow old they magnify the superiority of past times, and detract from the advantages of the present: this is natural enough; for admitting that the advantages were equal, we view them through a different medium—the sight, like all the other senses, loses its fine perceptions, and nought looks as bright through the dim optics of age as through the bright ones of youth; but as I have only reached the respectable point of middle age," continued Byron, "I cannot attribute my opinion of the falling off of the present men to my senility; and I really see or hear of no young men, either in the literary or political fields of London, who promise to supply the places of the men of my time—no successional crop to replace the passing or the past." I told Byron that the march of intellect had rendered the spread of knowledge so general, that young men abstained from writing, or at least from publishing, until they thought they had produced something likely to obtain attention, which was now much more difficult to be obtained than formerly, as people grew more fastidious every day. He would not agree to this, but maintained that mediocrity was the distinguishing feature of the present times, and that we should see no more men like those of his day. To hear Byron talk of himself, one would suppose that instead of thirty-six he was sixty years old: there is no affectation in this, as he says he feels all the languor and exhaustion of age.

Byron always talks in terms of high admiration of Mr. Canning; says he is a man of superior abilities, brilliant fancy, cultivated mind, and the most effective eloquence; and adds, that Canning only wanted to be born to a good estate to have made a great statesman. "Fortune," continued Byron, "would have saved him from tergiversation, the bare suspicion of which is destructive to the confidence a statesman ought to inspire. As it is," said he, "Canning is brilliant but not great, with all the elements in him that constitute greatness."

Talking of Lord ———, Byron observed, that his success in life was a proof of the weight that fortune gave a man, and his popularity a certain sign of his mediocrity: "the first," said Byron, "puts him out of the possibility of being suspected of mercenary motives; and the second precludes envy; yet you hear him praised at every side for his independence!—and a great merit it is truly," said he, "in a man who has high rank and large fortune—what can he want, and where could he the temptation to barter his principles, since he already has all that people seek in such a traffic? No, I see no merit in Lord ———'s independence; give me the man who is poor and untitled, with talents to excite temptation, and honesty to resist it, and I will give him credit for independence of principle, because he deserves it. People," continued Byron, "talk to you of Lord ———'s high character—in what does it consist? Why, in being as I before said, put by fortune and rank beyond the power of temptation—having an even temper, thanks to a cool head and a colder heart!—and a mediocrity of talents that insures his being 'content to live in decencies for ever,' while it exempts him from exciting envy or jealousy, the followers of excellence."

Byron continually reverts to Sir Walter Scott, and always in terms of admiration for his genius, and affection for his good qualities; he says that he never gets up from the perusal of one of his works, without finding himself in a better disposition; and that he generally reads his novels three times. "I find such a just mode of thinking," said Byron, "that I could fill volumes with detached thoughts from Scott, all, and each, full of truth and beauty. Then how good are his definitions! Do you remember, in 'Peveril of the Peak,' where he says, 'Presence of mind is courage. Real valor consists, not in being insensible to danger, but in being prompt to confront and disarm it.' How true is this, and what an admirable distinction between moral and physical courage?"

I complimented him on his memory, and he added:—"My memory is very retentive, but the passage I repeated I read this morning for the third time. How applicable to Scott's works is the observation made by Madame du Deffand on Richardson's Novels, in one of her letters to Voltaire: 'La morale y est en action, et n'a jamais été traitée d'une manière plus intéressante. On meurt d'envie d'être parfait après cette lecture, et l'on croit que rien n'est si aisé.' I think," continued Byron, after a pause, "that Scott is the only very successful genius that could be cited as being as generally beloved as a man, as he is admired as an author; and, I must add, he deserves it, for he is so thoroughly good-natured, sincere, and honest, that he disarms the envy and jealousy his extraordinary genius must excite. I hope to meet Scott once more before I die; for, worn out as are my affections, he still retains a strong hold of them."

There was something highly gratifying to the feelings in witnessing the warmth and cordiality that Byron's countenance and manner displayed when talking of Sir W. Scott; it proved how capable he was of entertaining friendship—a sentiment of which he so frequently professed to doubt the existence: but in this, as on many other points, he never did himself justice; and the turn for ridicule and satire implanted in his nature led him to indulge in observations in which his real feelings had no share. Circumstances had rendered Byron suspicious; he was apt to attribute every mark of interest or good-will shown to him as emanating from vanity, that sought gratification by a contact with his poetical celebrity; this encouraged his predilection for hoaxing, ridiculing, and doubting friends and friendship. But as Sir W. Scott's own well-earned celebrity put the possibility of such a motive out of the question, Byron yielded to the sentiment of friendship in all its force for him, and never named him but with praise and affection. Byron's was a proud mind, that resisted correction, but that might easily be led by kindness; his errors had been so severely punished, that he became reckless and misanthropic, to avenge the injustice he had experienced; and, as misanthropy was foreign to his nature, its partial indulgence produced the painful state of being continually at war with his better feelings, and of rendering him dissatisfied with himself and others.

Talking of the effects that ingratitude and disappointments produced on the character of the individual who experienced them, Byron said, "that they invariably soured the nature of the person, who, when reduced to this state of acidity, was decried as a cynical, ill-natured brute. People wonder," continued he, "that a man is sour who has been feeding on acids all his life. The extremes of adversity and prosperity produce the same effects; they harden the heart, and enervate the mind; they render a person so selfish, that, occupied solely with his own pains or pleasures, he ceases to feel for others; hence, as sweets turn to acids as well as sours, excessive prosperity may produce the same consequences as adversity."

His was a nature to be bettered by prosperity, and to be rendered obstinate by adversity. He invoked Stoicism to resist injustice, but its shield repelled not a single blow aimed at his peace, while its appearance deprived him of the sympathy for which his heart yearned. Let those, who would judge with severity the errors of this wayward child of genius, look back at his days of infancy and youth, and ask themselves whether, under such unfavorable auspices, they could have escaped the defects that tarnish the lustre of his fame—defects rendered more obvious by the brightness they partially obscured, and which, without that brightness, had perhaps never been observed.

An eagle confined in a cage could not have been more displaced than was Byron in the artificial and conventional society that disgusted him with the world; like that daring bird, he could fearlessly soar high, and contemplate the sun, but he was unfit for the busy haunts of men; and he, whose genius could people a desert, pined

in the solitude of crowds. The people he saw resembled not the creatures his fancy had formed, and, with a heart yearning towards his fellow-men, pride and a false estimate of mankind repelled him from seeking their sympathy, though it deprived them not of his, as not all his assumed Stoicism could subdue the kind feelings that spontaneously showed themselves when the misfortunes of others were named. Byron warred only with the vices and follies of his species; and if he had a bitter jest and biting sarcasm for these, he had pity and forbearance for affliction, even though deserved, and forgot the cause in the effect. Misfortune was sacred in his eyes, and seemed to be the last link of the chain that connected him with his fellow-men. I remember hearing a person in his presence revert to the unhappiness of an individual known to all the party present, and, having instanced some proofs of the unhappiness, observe, that the person was not to be pitied, for he had brought it on himself by misconduct. I shall never forget the expression of Byron's face; it glowed with indignation, and, turning to the person who had excited it, he said, "If, as you say, this heavy misfortune has been caused by ——'s misconduct, then is he doubly to be pitied, for he has the reproaches of conscience to embitter his draught. Those who have lost what is considered the right to pity in losing reputation and self-respect, are the persons who stand most in need of commiseration; and yet the charitable feelings of the over-moral would deny them this boon; reserving it for those on whom undeserved misfortunes fall, and who have that *within* which renders pity superfluous, have also respect to supply its place. Nothing so completely serves to demoralise a man as the certainty that he has lost the sympathy of his fellow-creatures; it breaks the last tie that binds him to humanity, and renders him reckless and irreclaimable. This," continued Byron, "is my moral; and this it is that makes me pity the guilty and respect the unfortunate."

While he spoke, the earnestness of his manner, and the increased color and animation of his countenance, bore evident marks of the sincerity of the sentiments he uttered: it was at such moments that his native goodness burst forth, and pages of misanthropic sarcasms could not efface the impression they left behind, though he often endeavored to destroy such impressions by pleasantries against himself.

"When you go to Naples you must make acquaintance with Sir William Drummond," said Byron, "for he is certainly one of the most erudite men, and admirable philosophers now living. He has all the wit of Voltaire, with a profundity that seldom appertains to wit, and writes so forcibly, and with such elegance and purity of style, that his works possess a peculiar charm. Have you read his 'Academical questions?' if not, get them directly, and I think you will agree with me, that the preface to that work alone would prove Sir William Drummond an admirable writer. He concludes it by the following sentence, which I think one of the best in our language—'Prejudice may be trusted to guard the outworks for a short space of time, while Reason slumbers in the citadel; but if the latter sink into a lethargy, the former will quickly erect a standard for herself. Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty, support each other: he who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not is a slave.' Is not the passage admirable?" continued Byron; "how few could have written it, and yet how few read Drummond's works! they are too good to be popular. His 'Odin' is really a fine poem, and has some passages that are beautiful but it is so little read that it may be said to have dropped still-born from the press, a mortifying proof of the bad taste of the age. His translation of Persius is not only very literal, but preserves much of the spirit of the original; a merit that, let me tell you, is very rare at present, when translations have about as much of the spirit of the original as champagne diluted with three parts of water may be supposed to retain of the pure and sparkling wine. Translations, for the most part resemble imitations, where the marked defects are exaggerated, and the beauties passed over, always excepting the imitations of Mathews," continued Byron, "who seems to have continuous chords in his mind, that vibrate to those in the minds of others, as he gives not only the look, tones, and manners of the persons he personifies, but the very train of thinking, and the expressions they indulge in; and, strange to say, this modern Proteus succeeds best when the imitated is a person of genius or great talent, as he seems to identify himself with him. His imitation of Curran can hardly be so called—it is a *continuation*, and is inimitable. I remember Sir Walter Scott's observing, that Mathews' imitations were of the *mind*, to those who had the key; but as the ma-

jerity had it not, they were contented with admiring those of the person, and pronounced him a mimic who ought to be considered an accurate and philosophic observer of human nature, blessed with the rare talent of intuitively identifying himself with the minds of others. But, to return to Sir William Drummond," continued Byron, "he has escaped all the defects of translators, and his Persius resembles the original as nearly in feeling and sentiment as two languages so dissimilar in idiom will admit. Translations almost always disappoint me; I must, however, except Pope's 'Homer,' which has more of the spirit of Homer than all the other translations put together, and the Teian bard himself might have been proud of the beautiful odes which the Irish Anacreon has given us.

"Of the wits about town, I think," said Byron, "that George Colman was one of the most agreeable; he was *toujours prêt*, and after two or three glasses of champagne, the quicksilver of his wit mounted to *beau fixe*. Colman has a good deal of tact; he feels that convivial hours were meant for enjoyment, and understands society so well, that he never obtrudes any private feeling, except hilarity, into it. His jokes are all good, and *readable*, and flow without effort, like the champagne that often gives birth to them, sparkle after sparkle, and brilliant to the last. Then one is sure of Colman," continued Byron, "which is a great comfort; for to be made to cry when one had made up one's mind to laugh, is a *triste* affair. I remember that this was the great drawback with Sheridan; a little wine made him melancholy, and his melancholy was contagious; for who could bear to see the wizard, who could at will command smiles or tears, yield to the latter without sharing them, though one wished that the exhibition had been less public? My feelings were never more excited than while writing the Monody on Sheridan—every word that I wrote came direct from the heart. Poor Sherry! what a noble mind was in him overthown by poverty! and to see the men with whom he had passed his life, the dark souls whom his genius illumined, rolling in wealth, the Sybarites whose slumbers a crushed rose-leaf would have disturbed, leaving him to die on the pallet of poverty, his last moments disturbed by the myrmidons of the law. Oh! it was enough to disgust one with human nature, but above all with the nature of those who, professing liberality, were so little acquainted with its twin-sister generosity.

"I have seen poor Sheridan weep, and good cause had he," continued Byron. "Placed by his transcendent talents in an elevated sphere, without the means of supporting the necessary appearance, to how many humiliations must his fine mind have submitted, ere he had arrived at the state in which I knew him, of reckless jokes to pacify creditors of a morning, and alternate smiles and tears of an evening, round the boards where ostentations dulness called in his aid to give a zest to the wine that often maddened him, but could not thaw the frozen current of their blood. Moore's Monody on Sheridan," continued Byron, "was a fine burst of generous indignation, and is one of the most powerful of his compositions. It was as daring as my 'Avatar,' which was bold enough, and, God knows, true enough, but I have never repented it. Your countrymen behaved dreadfully on that occasion; despair may support the chains of tyranny, but it is only baseness that can sing and dance in them, as did the Irish on the ——'s visit. But I see you would prefer another subject, so let us talk of something else, though this cannot be a humiliating one to you personally, as I know your husband did not make one among the rabble at that Saturnalia.

"The Irish are strange people," continued Byron, "at one moment overpowered by sadness, and the next elevated to joy; impressionable as heated wax, and like it changing each time that it is warmed. The dolphin, when shone upon by the sun, changes not its hues more frequently than do your mobile countrymen, and this want of stability will leave them long what centuries have found them—slaves. I liked them before the degradation of 1822, but the dance in chains disgusted me. What would Grattan and Curran have thought of it? and Moore, why struck he not the harp of Erin to awaken the slumbering souls of his supine countrymen!"

PART THE SECOND.

To those who only know Byron as an author, it would be difficult, if not impossible; to convey a just impression of him as a man. In him the elements of good

and evil were so strongly mixed, that an error could not be detected that was not allied to some good quality; and his fine qualities, and they were many, could hardly be separated from the faults that sullied them. In bestowing on Byron a genius as versatile as it was brilliant and powerful, Nature had not denied him warmth of heart, and the kind affections that beget, while they are formed to repay friendship; but a false *beau idéal* that he had created for himself, and a wish of exciting wonder, led him into a line of conduct calculated to lower him in the estimation of superficial observers, who judge from appearances, while those who had opportunities of observing him more nearly, and who made allowance for his besetting sin, (the assumption of vices and errors, that he either had not, or exaggerated the appearance of,) found in him more to admire than censure, and to pity than condemn. In his severest satires, however much of malice there might be in the expression, there was little in the feeling that dictated them; they came from the imagination and not from the heart, for in a few minutes after he had unveiled the errors of some friend or acquaintance, he would call attention to some of their good qualities with as much apparent pleasure as he had dwelt on their defects. A nearly daily intercourse of ten weeks with Byron left the impression on my mind, that if an extraordinary quickness of perception prevented his passing over the errors of those with whom he came in contact, and a natural incontinence of speech betrayed him into an exposure of them, a candor and good-nature, quite as remarkable, often led him to enumerate their virtues, and to draw attention to them. It may be supposed, that with such powerful talents, there was less excuse for the attacks he was in the habit of making on his friends and acquaintances; but those very talents were the cause; they suggested a thousand lively and piquant images to his fancy, relative to the defects of those with whom he associated; and he had not self-command sufficient to repress the sallies that he knew must show at once his discrimination and talents for ridicule, and amuse his hearers, however they might betray a want of good-nature and sincerity.

There was no premeditated malignity in Byron's nature; though constantly in the habit of exposing the follies and vanity of his friends, I never heard him blacken their reputations, and I never felt an unfavorable impression from any of the censures he bestowed, because I saw they were aimed at follies, and not character. He used frequently to say that people hated him more for exposing their follies than if he had attacked their moral characters, adding, "Such is the vanity of human nature, that men would prefer being defamed to being ridiculed, and would much sooner pardon the first than the second. There is much more folly than vice in the world," said Byron. "The appearance of the latter is often assumed by the dictates of the former, and people pass for being vicious who are only foolish. I have seen such examples," continued he, "of this in the world, that it makes one rather incredulous as to the extent of actual vice; but I can believe any thing of the capabilities of vanity and folly, having witnessed to what length they can go. I have seen women compromise their honor (in appearance only) for the triumph (and a hopeful one) of rivalling some contemporary belle; and men sacrifice theirs, in reality, by false boastings for the gratification of vanity. All, all is vanity and vexation of spirit," added he; "the first being the legitimate parent of the second, an offspring that, school it how you will, is sure to turn out a curse to its parent."

"Lord Blessington has been talking to me about Mr. Galt," said Lord Byron, "and tells me much good of him. I am pleased at finding he is as amiable a man as his recent works prove him to be a clever and intelligent author. When I knew Galt, years ago, I was not in a frame of mind to form an impartial opinion of him; his mildness and equanimity struck me even then; but, to say the truth, his manner had not deference enough for my then aristocratical taste, and finding I could not awe him into a respect sufficiently profound for my sublime self, either as a peer or an author, I felt a little grudge towards him that has now completely worn off. There is a quaint humor and observance of character in his novels that interest me very much, and when he chooses to be pathetic he fools one to his bent, for I assure you the 'Entail' beguiled me of some portion of watery humors, yclept tears, 'albeit unused to the melting mood.' What I admire particularly in Galt's works," continued Byron, "is, that with a perfect knowledge of human nature and its frailties and legerdemain tricks, he shows a tenderness of heart which convinces one that *his* is in the right place, and he has a sly caustic humor that is very amusing. All that Lord Blessington

has been telling me of Galt has made me reflect on the striking difference between his (Lord B's) nature and my own. I had an excellent opportunity of judging Galt, being shut up on board ship with him for some days; and though I saw he was mild, equal, and sensible, I took no pains to cultivate his acquaintance further than I should with any common-place person, which he was not; and Lord Blessington in London, with a numerous acquaintance, and 'all appliances to boot,' for choosing and selecting, has found so much to like in Galt, *malgré* the difference of their politics, that his liking has grown into friendship.

"I must say that I never saw the milk of human kindness overflow in any nature to so great a degree, as in Lord Blessington's," continued Byron. "I used, before I knew him well, to think that Shelley was the most amiable person I ever knew, but I now think that Lord B. bears off the palm, for he has been assailed by all the temptations that so few can resist, those of unvarying prosperity, and has passed the ordeal victoriously—a triumphant proof of the extraordinary goodness of his nature, while poor Shelley had been tried in the school of adversity only, which is not such a corrupter as is that of prosperity. If Lord B. has not the power, Midas-like, of turning whatever he touches into gold," continued Byron, "he has at least that of turning all into good. I, alas! detect only the evil qualities of those that approach me, while he discovers the amiable. It appears to me, that the extreme excellence of his own disposition prevents his attributing evil to others; I do assure you," continued Byron, "I have thought better of mankind since I have known him intimately." The earnestness of Byron's manner convinced me that he spoke his real sentiments relative to Lord B., and that his commendations were not uttered with a view of gratifying me, but flowed spontaneously in the honest warmth of the moment. A long, daily and hourly knowledge of the person he praised, has enabled me to judge of the justice of the commendation, and Byron never spoke more truly than when he pronounced Lord B's a faultless nature. While he was speaking, he continually looked back, for fear that the person of whom he spoke should overhear his remarks, as he was riding behind, at a little distance from us.

"Is Lady——as restless and indefatigable as ever? (asked Byron)—She is an extraordinary woman, and the most thorough-paced manœuvrer I ever met with; she cannot make or accept an invitation, or perform any of the common courtesies of life, without manœuvring, and has always some plan in agitation, to which all her acquaintance are made subservient. This is so evident, that she never approached me that I did not expect her to levy contributions on my muse, the only disposable property I possessed; and I was as surprised as grateful at finding it was not pressed into the service for compassing some job, or accomplishing some mischief. Then she passes for being clever, when she is only cunning; her life has been passed in giving the best proof of want of cleverness, that of intriguing to carry points not worth intriguing for, and that must have occurred in the natural course of events without any manœuvring on her part. Cleverness and cunning are incompatible—I never saw them united; the latter is the resource of the weak, and is only natural to them: children and fools are always cunning, but clever people never. The world, or rather the persons who compose it, are so indolent, that when they see great personal activity, joined to indefatigable and unshrinking exertion of tongue, they conclude that such effects must proceed from adequate causes, never reflecting that real cleverness requires not such aids; but few people take the trouble of analysing the actions or motives of others, and least of all when such others have no envy-stirring attractions. On this account Lady ——'s manœuvres are set down to cleverness; but when she was young and pretty they were less favorably judged. Women of a certain age (continued Byron) are for the most part bores or *méchantes*. I have known some delightful exceptions, but on consideration they were past the certain age, and were no longer like the coffin of Mahomet hovering between heaven and earth, that is to say, floating between maturity and age, but had fixed their persons on the unpretending easy chairs of *vieillesse*, and their thoughts neither on war nor conquest except the conquest of self. Age is beautiful when no attempt is made to modernise it. Who can look at the interesting remains of loveliness without some of the same tender feelings of melancholy with which we regard a fine ruin! Both mark the triumph of the mighty conqueror Time; and whether we examine the eyes, the windows of the soul, through which love and hope once sparkled, now dim and languid, showing only resignation, or the ruined casements of the abbey or castle

through which blazed the light of tapers, and the smoke of incense offered to the Deity, the feelings excited are much the same, and we approach both with reverence—always (interrupted Byron) provided that the old beauty is not a specimen of the florid Gothic—by which I mean restored, painted and varnished—and that the abbey or castle is not whitewashed; both under such circumstances, produce the same effect on me, and all reverence is lost; but I do seriously admire age when it is not ashamed to let itself be seen and look on it as something sanctified and holy, having passed through the fire of its passions, and being on the verge of the grave.

"I once (said Byron) found it necessary to call up all that could be said in favor of matured beauty, when my heart became captive to a *donna* of forty-six, who certainly excited as lively a passion in my breast as ever it has known; and even now the autumnal charms of Lady —— are remembered by me with more than admiration. She resembled a landscape by Claude Lorraine, with a setting sun, her beauties enhanced by the knowledge that they were shedding their last dying beams which threw a radiance around. A woman (continued Byron) is only grateful for her *first* and *last* conquest. The first of poor dear Lady ——'s was achieved before I entered on this world of care, but the *last* I do flatter myself was reserved for me and a *bonne bouche* it was."

I told Byron that his poetical sentiments of the attractions of matured beauty had, at the moment, suggested four lines to me; which he begged me to repeat, and he laughed not a little when I recited the following lines to him:—

Oh! talk not to me of the charms of youth's dimples,
There's surely more sentiment center'd in wrinkles.
They're the triumphs of time that mark beauty's decay,
Telling tales of years past, and the few left to stay.

"I never spent an hour with Moore (said Byron) without being ready to apply to him the expression attributed to Aristophanes, 'You have spoken roses;' his thoughts and expressions have all the beauty and freshness of those flowers, but the piquancy of his wit, and the readiness of his repartees, prevent one's ear being cloyed by too much sweets, and one cannot 'die of a rose in aromatic pain' with Moore, though he does speak roses, there is such an endless variety in his conversation. Moore is the only poet (continued Byron) whose conversation equals his writings; he comes into society with a mind as fresh and buoyant as if he had not expended such a multiplicity of thoughts on paper; and leaves behind him an impression that he possesses an inexhaustible mine equally brilliant as the specimens he has given us. Will you, after this frank confession of my opinion of your countryman, ever accuse me of injustice again? You see I can render justice when I am not forced into its opposite extreme by hearing people overpraised, which always awakes the sleeping devil in my nature, as witness the desperate attack I gave your friend Lord —— the other day, merely because you all wanted to make me believe he was a model, which he is not; though I admit he is not *all* or *half* that which I accused him of being. Had you dispraised, probably I should have defended him."

"I will give you some stanzas I wrote yesterday, (said Byron;) they are as simple as even Wordsworth himself could write, and would do for music."

The following are the lines:—

TO ——

But once I dared to lift my eyes—
To lift my eyes to thee;
And since that day, beneath the skies,
No other sight they see.

In vain sleep shuts them in the night—
The night grows day to me;
Presenting idly to my sight
What still a dream must be.

A fatal dream—for many a bar
Divides thy fate from mine;
And still my passions wake and war,
But peace be still with thine.

"No one writes songs like Moore, (said Byron.) Sentiment and imagination are joined to the most harmonious versification, and I know no greater treat than to hear him sing his own compositions; the powerful expression he gives to them, and the pathos of the tones of his voice, tend to produce an effect on my feelings that no other songs, or singer, ever could. —— —— used to write pretty songs, and certainly has talent, but I maintain there is more poesy in her prose, at least more fiction, than is to be met with in a folio of poetry. You look shocked at what you think my ingratitude towards her, but if you knew half the cause I have to dislike her, you would not condemn me. You shall however know some parts of that serio-comic drama, in which I was forced to play a part; and, if you listen with candor, you must allow I was more sinned against than sinning."

The curious history that followed this

preface is not intended for the public eye, as it contains anecdotes and statements that are calculated to give pain to several individuals—the same feeling that dictates the suppression of this most curious episode in Byron's London life, has led to the suppression of many other piquant and amusing disclosures made by him, as well as some of the most severe poetical portraits that ever were drawn of some of his supposed friends, and many of his acquaintances. The vigor with which they are sketched proves that he entered into every fold of the characters of the originals, and that he painted them *con amore*, but he could not be accused of being a flattering portrait painter.

The disclosures made by Byron could never be considered *confidential*, because they were always at the service of the first listener who fell in his way, and who happened to know any thing of the parties he talked of. They were not confided with any injunction to secrecy, but were indiscriminately made to his chance companions —nay, he often declared his decided intention of writing copious notes to the Life he had given to his friend Moore, in which *the whole truth* should be declared of, for, and against, himself and others.

Talking of this gift to Mr. Moore, he asked me if it had made a great sensation in London, and whether people were not greatly alarmed at the thoughts of being shown up in it? He seemed much pleased in anticipating the panic it would occasion, naming all the persons who would be most alarmed.

I told him that he had rendered the most essential service to the cause of morality by his confessions, as a dread of similar disclosures would operate in putting people on their guard in reposing dangerous confidence in men, than all the homilies that ever were written; and that people would in future be warned by the phrase of "beware of being *Byroned*," instead of the old cautions used in past times. "This (continued I) is a sad antithesis to your motto of *Crede Byron*." He appeared vexed at my observations, and it struck me that he seemed uneasy and out of humor for the next half-hour of our ride. I told him that his gift to Moore had suggested to me the following lines:—

The ancients were famed for their friendship we're told,
Witness Damon and Pythias, and others of old;
But, Byron, 'twas thine friendship's power to extend,
Who surrender'd thy Life for the sake of a friend.

He laughed heartily at the lines, and, in laughing at them, recovered his good-humor.

"I have never," said Byron, "succeeded to my satisfaction in an epigram; my attempts have not been happy, and knowing Greek as I do, and admiring the Greek epigrams, which excel all others, it is mortifying that I have not succeeded better: but I begin to think that epigrams demand a peculiar talent, and that talent I decidedly have not. One of the best in the English language is that of Rogers on ——; it has the true Greek talent of expressing by implication what is wished to be conveyed.

—— has no heart they say, but I deny it:
He has a heart—he gets his speeches by it.

This is the *ne plus ultra* of English epigrams." I told Byron that I had copied Roger's thought, in two lines on an acquaintance of mine as follows:—

The charming Mary has no mind they say;
I prove she has—it changes every day.

This amused him, and he repeated several epigrams, very clever, but which are too severe to be given in these pages. The epigrams of Byron are certainly not equal to his other poetry; they are merely clever, and such as any person of talent might have written, but who except him, in our day, could have written Childe Harold? No one; for admitting that the same talent exists, (which I am by no means prepared to admit) the possessor must have experienced the same destiny, to have brought it to the same perfection. The reverses that nature and circumstances entailed on Byron served but to give a higher polish and a finer temper to his genius. All that marred the perfectibility of the man, had perfected the poet, and this must have been evident to those who approached him, though it had escaped his own observation. Had the choice been left him, I am quite sure he would not have hesitated a moment in choosing between the renown of the poet, even at the price of the happiness of the man, as he lived much more in the future than in the present, as do all persons of genius. As it was, he felt dissatisfied with his position, without feeling that it was the whetstone that sharpened his powers; for with all his affected philosophy, he was a philosopher but in theory, and never reduced it to practice. One of the strangest anomalies in Byron was the exquisite taste displayed in his

descriptive poetry, and the total want of it that was so visible in his modes of life. Fine scenery seemed to produce little effect on his feelings, though his descriptions are so glowing, and the elegancies and comforts of refined life he appeared to as little understand as value. This last did not arise from a contempt of them, as might be imagined, but from an ignorance of what constituted them. I have seen him apparently delighted with the luxurious inventions in furniture, equipages, plate, &c., common to all persons of a certain station or fortune, and yet after an inquiry as to their prices—an inquiry so seldom made by persons of his rank, shrink back alarmed at the thought of the expense, though there was nothing alarming in it, and congratulate himself that he had no such luxuries, or did not require them. I should say that a bad and vulgar taste predominated in all Byron's equipments, whether in dress or in furniture. I saw his bed at Genoa, when I passed through in 1826, and it certainly was the most gaudily vulgar thing I ever saw; the curtains in the worst taste, and the cornice having his family motto of "Crede Byron" surmounted by baronial coronets. His carriages and his liveries were in the same bad taste, having an affectation of finery, but *mesquin* in the details, and tawdry in the *ensemble;* and it was evident that he piqued himself on them, by the complacency with which they were referred to. These trifles are touched upon, as being characteristic of the man, and would have been passed by, as unworthy of notice, had he not shown that they occupied a considerable portion of his attention. He has even asked us if they were not rich and handsome, and then remarked that no wonder they were so, as they cost him a great deal of money. At such moments it was difficult to remember that one was speaking to the author of Childe Harold. If the poet was often forgotten in the levities of the man, the next moment some original observation, cutting repartee, or fanciful simile, reminded one that he who could be ordinary in trifles, (the only points of assimilation between him and the common herd of men,) was only ordinary when he descended to their level, but when once on subjects worthy his attention, the great poet shone forth, and they who had felt self-complacency at noting the futilities that had lessened the distance between him and them, were forced to see the immeasurable space which separated them, when he allowed his genius to be seen. It is only Byron's pre-eminence as a poet that can give interest to such details as the writer has entered into: if they are written without partiality, they are also given in no unfriendly spirit; but his defects are noted with the same feeling with which an astronomer would remark the specks that are visible even in the brightest stars, and which having examined more minutely than the common observers, he wishes to give the advantages of his discoveries, though the specks he describes have not made him overlook the brightness of the luminaries they sullied, but could not obscure.

"You know —— of course, (said Byron,) every one does, I hope you don't like him; water and oil are not more anti-pathetic than he and I are to each other. I admit that his abilities are great; they are of the very first order; but he has that which almost always accompanies great talents, and generally proves a counterbalance to them—an overweening ambition, which renders him not over-nice about the means, as long as he attains the end; and this facility will prevent his ever being a truly great man, though it may abridge his road to what is considered greatness—official dignity. You shall see some verses in which I have not spared him, and yet I have only said what I believe to be strictly correct. Poets are said to succeed best in fiction; but this I deny; at least I always write best when truth inspires me, and my satires, which are founded on truth, have more spirit than all my other productions, for they were written *con amore*. My intimacy with the —— family (continued Byron) let me into many of ——'s secrets, and they did not raise him in my estimation.

"One of the few persons in London, whose society served to correct my predisposition to misanthropy, was Lord Holland. There is more benignity, and a greater share of the milk of human kindness in his nature than in that of any man I know, always excepting Lord B——. Then there is such a charm in his manners, his mind is so highly cultivated, his conversation so agreeable, and his temper so equal and bland, that he never fails to send away his guests content with themselves and delighted with him. I never (continued Byron) heard a difference of opinion about Lord Holland; and I am sure no one could know him without liking him. Lord Erskine, in talking to me of Lord Holland, observed, that it was his extreme good nature alone that pre-

vented his taking as high a political position as his talents entitled him to fill. This quality (continued Byron) will never prevent ——'s rising in the world; so that his talents will have a fair chance.

"It is difficult (said Byron) when one detests an author not to detest his works. There are some that I dislike so cordially, that I am aware of my incompetency to give an impartial opinion of their writings. Southey, *par exemple*, is one of these. When travelling in Italy, he was reported to me as having circulated some reports much to my disadvantage, and still more to that of two ladies of my acquaintance; all of which, through the kind medium of some good-natured friends, were brought to my ears; and I have vowed eternal vengeance against him, and all who uphold him; which vengeance has been poured forth, in phials of wrath, in the shape of epigrams and lampoons, some of which you shall see. When any one attacks me, on the spur of the moment I sit down and write all the *méchanceté* that comes into my head; and, as some of these sallies have merit, they amuse me, and are too good to be torn or burned, and so are kept, and see the light long after the feeling that dictated them has subsided. All my malice evaporates in the effusions of my pen: but I dare say those that excite it would prefer any other mode of vengeance. At Pisa, a friend told me that Walter Savage Landor had declared he either would not, or could not, read my works. I asked my officious friend if he was sure which it was that Landor said, as the *would not* was not offensive, and the *could not* was highly so. After some reflection, he, of course *en ami*, chose the most disagreeable signification; and I marked down Landor in the tablet of memory as a person to whom a *coup-de-pat* must be given in my forthcoming work, though he really is a man whose brilliant talents and profound erudition I cannot help admiring as much as I respect his character—various proofs of the generosity, manliness, and independence of which has reached me; so you see I can render justice (*en petite comité*) even to a man who says he could not read my works; this, at least, shows some good feeling, if the *petit* vengeance of attacking him in my work cannot be defended; but my attacking proves the truth of the observation made by a French writer—that we don't like people for the merit we discover in them, but for that which they find in us."

When Byron was one day abusing —— most vehemently, we accused him of undue severity: and he replied, he was only deterred from treating him much more severely by the fear of being indicted under he Act of cruelty to Animals!

"I am quite sure (said Byron) that many of our worst actions and our worst thoughts are caused by friends. An enemy can never do as much injury, or cause as much pain: if he speaks ill of one, it is set down as an exaggeration of malice, and therefore does little harm, and he has no opportunity of telling one any of the disagreeable things that are said in one's absence; but a friend has such an amiable candor in admitting the faults least known, and often unsuspected, and of denying or defending with *acharnement* those that can neither be denied nor defended, that he is sure to do one mischief. Then he thinks himself bound to retail and detail every disagreeable remark or story he hears, and generally under the injunction of secrecy; so that one is tormented without the power of bringing the slanderer to account, unless by a breach of confidence. I am always tempted to exclaim, with Socrates, 'My friend! there are no friends!' when I hear and see the advantages of friendship. It is odd (continued Byron) that people do not seem aware that the person who repeats to a friend an offensive observation, uttered when he was absent, without any idea that he was likely to hear it, is much more blameable than the person who originally said it; of course I except a friend who hears a charge brought against one's honor, and who comes and openly states what he has heard, that it may be refuted: but this friends seldom do; for, as that Queen of egotists, La Marquis du Deffand, truly observed—'Ceux qu'on nomme amis sont ceux par qui on n'a pas à craindre d'être assassiné, mais qui laisseroient faire les assassins.' Friends are like diamonds; all wish to possess them: but few can or will pay their price; and there never was more wisdom embodied in a phrase than in that which says—'Defend me from my friends, and I will defend myself from my enemies.'"

Talking of poetry, Byron said that "next to the affected simplicity of the Lake School, he disliked prettiness, or what are called flowers of poetry; they are only admissible in the poetry of ladies, (said he,) which should always have a sprinkling of dew-gemmed leaves and flowers of rainbow hues, with tuneful birds and gorgeous butterflies—" Here he laughed like a child, and added, "I suppose you

would never forgive me if I finished the sentence—sweet emblems of fair woman's looks and mind." Having joined in the laugh, which was irresistible from the mock heroic air he assumed, I asked him how he could prove any resemblance between tuneful birds, gorgeous butterflies, and woman's face or mind. He immediately replied, "Have I not printed a certain line, in which I say, 'the music breathing from her face!' and do not all, even philosophers, assert, that there is harmony in beauty, nay, that there is no beauty without it? Now tuneful birds are musical; *ergo*, that simile holds good as far as the face, and the butterfly must stand for the mind, brilliant, light, and wandering. I say nothing of its being the emblem of the soul, because I have not quite made up my mind that women have souls; but, in short, flowers and all that is fragile and beautiful must remind one of women. So do not be offended with my comparison.

"But to return to the subject, (continued Byron,) you do not, cannot like what are called flowers in poetry. I try to avoid them as much as possible in mine, and I hope you think that I have succeeded." I answered that he had given oaks to Parnassus instead of flowers, and while disclaiming the compliment it seemed to gratify him.

"A successful work (said Byron) makes a man a wretch for life: it engenders in him a thirst for notoriety and praise, that precludes the possibility of repose; this spurs him on to attempt others, which are always expected to be superior to the first; hence arises disappointment, as expectation being too much excited is rarely gratified, and, in the present day, one failure is placed as a counterbalance to fifty successful efforts. Voltaire was right (continued Byron) when he said that the fate of a literary man resembled that of the flying fish; if he dives in the water the fish devour him, and if he rises in the air he is attacked by the birds. Voltaire (continued Byron) had personal experience of the persecution a successful author must undergo; but *malgré* all this, he continued to keep alive the sensation he had excited in the literary world, and, while at Ferney, thought only of astonishing Paris. Montesquieu has said 'that *moins on pense plus on parle.*' Voltaire was a proof, indeed I have known many (said Byron,) of the falseness of this observation, for who ever wrote or talked as much as Voltaire? But Montesquieu, when he wrote his remark, thought not of literary men; he was thinking of the *bavards* of soci ty, who certainly think less and talk more than all others. I was once very much amused (said Byron) by overhearing the conversation of two country ladies, in company with a celebrated author, who happened to be that evening very taciturn: one remarked to the other, how strange it was that a person reckoned so clever, should be so silent! and the other answered, Oh! he has nothing left to say, he has sold all his thoughts to his publishers. This you will allow was a philosophical way of explaining the silence of an author.

"One of the things that most annoyed me in London (said Byron) was the being continually asked to give my opinion on the works of contemporaries. I got out of the difficulty as well as I could, by some equivocal answer that might be taken in two ways; but even this prudence did not save me, and I have been accused of envy and jealousy of authors, of whose works, God knows, I was far from being envious. I have also been suspected of jealousy towards ancient as well as modern writers; but Pope, whose poems I really envy, and whose works I admire, perhaps more than any living or dead English writer, they have never found out that I was jealous of, nay, probably, as I always praise him, they suppose I do not seriously admire him, as insincerity on all points is universally attributed to me.

"I have often thought of writing a book to be filled with all the charges brought against me in England (said Byron); it would make an interesting folio, with my notes, and might serve posterity as a proof of the charity, good-nature, and candor of Christian England in the nineteenth century. Our laws are bound to think a man innocent until he is proved to be guilty; but our English society condemn him before trial, which is a summary proceeding that saves trouble.

"However, I must say, (continued Byron,) that it is only those to whom any superiority is accorded, that are prejudged or treated with undue severity in London, for mediocrity meets with the utmost indulgence, on the principle of sympathy, 'a fellow-feeling makes them wondrous kind.' The moment my wife left me, I was assailed by all the falsehoods that malice could invent or slander publish; how many wives have since left their husbands, and husbands their wives, without either of the parties being blackened by defamation, the public having the sense to perceive that a husband and wife's living

together or separate can only concern the parties, or their immediate families! but in *my case*, no sooner did Lady Byron take herself off, than my character went off; or rather was carried off, not by force of arms, but by force of tongues and pens too; and there was no crime too dark to be attributed to me by the moral English, to account for so very common an occurrence as a separation in high life. I was thought a devil, because Lady Byron was allowed to be an angel, and that it formed a pretty antithesis; *mais hélas!* there are neither angels nor devils on earth, though some of one's acquaintance might tempt one into the belief of the existence of the latter. After twenty, it is difficult to believe in that of the former, though the *first* and *last* object of one's affection has some of its attributes. Imagination, (said Byron) resembles hope—when unclouded, it gilds all that it touches with its own bright hue: mine makes me see beauty wherever youth and health have impressed their stamp; and after all I am not very far from the goddess, when I am with her handmaids, for such they certainly are. Sentimentalists may despise 'buxom health, with rosy hue,' which has something dairy-maid like, I confess, in the sound, (continued he)—for buxom, however one may like the reality, is not euphonious, but I have the association of plumpness, rosy hue, good spirits, and good humor, all brought before me in the homely phrase; and all these united give me a better idea of beauty than lanky languor, sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought; and bad health, and bad humor, which are synonymous, making to-morrow cheerless as to-day. Then see some of our fine ladies, whose nerves are more active than their brains, who talk sentiment, and ask you to 'administer to a mind diseased, and pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,' when it is the body that is diseased, and the rooted sorrow is some chronic malady: these, I own (continued Byron), alarm me, and a delicate woman, however prettily it may sound, harrows up my feelings with a host of shadowy ills to come, of vapors, hysterics, nerves, megrims, intermitting fevers, and all the ills that wait upon poor *weak* women, who, when sickly are generally weak in more senses than one. The best dower a woman can bring is health and good humor; the latter, whatever we may say of the triumphs of mind, depends on the former, as according to the old poem—

> Temper ever waits on health,
> As luxury depends on wealth.

But mind (said Byron) when I object to delicate women, that is to say, to women of delicate health, *alias* sickly, I don't mean to say that I like coarse, fat ladies, *à la Rubens*, whose minds must be impenetrable, from the mass of matter in which they are incased. No! I like an active and healthy mind, in an active and healthy person, each extending its beneficial influence over the other, and maintaining their equilibrium, the body illumined by the light within, but that light not let out by any 'chinks made by time;' in short, I like, as who does not, (continued Byron) a handsome healthy woman, with an intelligent and intelligible mind, who can do something more than what it is said a French woman can only do, *habille*, *babille*, and *dishabille*, who is not obliged to have recourse to dress, shopping and visits, to get through a day, and soirees, operas, and flirting to pass an evening. You see, I am moderate in my desires; I only wish for perfection.

"There was a time (said Byron) when fame appeared the most desirable of all acquisitions to me; it was my 'being's end and aim,' but now—how worthless does it appear! Alas! how true are the lines—

> La Nominanza é color d'erba,
> Che viene e va; e quei la discolora
> Per cui vien fuori della terra acerba.

And dearly is fame bought, as we all have found, who have acquired even a small portion of it—

> Che seggendo in piuma
> In Fama non si vien, ne sotto coltre.

No! with sleepless nights, excited nerves, and morbid feelings, is fame purchased, and envy, hatred, and jealousy follow the luckless possessor.

> O ciechi, il tanto affaticar che giova?
> Tutti tornate alla gran madre antica,
> E il vostro nome appena si ritrova.

Nay, how often has a tomb been denied to those whose names have immortalised their country, or else granted when shame compelled the tardy justice! Yet, after all, fame is but like all other pursuits, ending in disappointment—its worthlessness only discovered when attained, and

Senza la qual chi sua vita consuma
Cotal vestigio in terra di se lascia
Qual fumo in aere, ed in acqua la schiuma.

"People complain of the brevity of life, (said Byron,) should they not rather complain of its length, as its enjoyments cease long before the halfway house of life is passed, unless one has the luck to die young, ere the illusions that render existence supportable have faded away, and are replaced by experience, that dull monitress, that ever comes too late? While youth steers the bark of life, and passion impels her on, experience keeps aloof; but when youth and passion are fled, and that we no longer require her aid, she comes to reproach us with the past, to disgust us with the present, and alarm us with the future.

"We buy wisdom with happiness, and who would purchase it at such a price? To be happy, we must forget the past, and think not of the future; and who that has a soul, or mind, can do this? No one (continued Byron); and this proves, that those who have either, know no happiness on this earth. Memory precludes happiness, whatever Rogers may say to the contrary, for it borrows from the past, to imbitter the present, bringing back to us all the grief that has most wounded, or the happiness that has most charmed us; the first leaving its sting, and of the second—

Nesson maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice,
Nulla miseria.

Let us look back (continued Byron) to those days of grief, the recollection of which now pains us, and we shall find that time has only cicatrised, but not effaced the scars; and if we reflect on the happiness, that seen through the vista of the past seems now so bright, memory will tell us that, at the actual time referred to, we were far from thinking so highly of it, nay—that at that very period, we were obliged to draw drafts on the future, to support the then present, though now that epoch, tinged by the rays of memory, seems so brilliant, and renders the present more sombre by contrast. We are so constituted (said Byron) that we know not the value of our possessions until we have lost them. Let us think of the friends that death has snatched from us, whose loss has left aching voids in the heart never again to be filled up; and memory will tell us that we prized not their presence, while we were blessed with it, though, could the grave give them back, now that we had learned to estimate their value, all else could be borne, and we believe (because it is impossible) that happiness might once more be ours. We should live with our friends, (said Byron) not as the worldly-minded philosopher says, as though they may one day become our enemies, but as though we may one day lose them; and this maxim, strictly followed, will not only render our lives happier while together, but will save the survivors from those bitter pangs that memory conjures up, of slights and unkindnesses offered to those we have lost, when too late for atonement, and arms remorse with double force because it is too late." It was in such conversations that Byron was seen in his natural character; the feeling, the tenderness of his nature shone forth at such moments, and his natural character, like the diamond, when breathed upon, though dimmed for a time, soon recovered its purity and showed its original lustre, perhaps the more for having been for a moment obscured.

How much has Byron to unlearn ere he can hope for peace! Then he is proud of his false knowledge. I call it false, because it neither makes him better nor happier, and true knowledge ought to do the former, though I admit it cannot the latter. We are not relieved by the certainty that we have an incurable disease; on the contrary, we cease to apply remedies, and so let the evil increase. So it is with human nature: by believing ourselves devoted to selfishness, we supinely sink into its withering and inglorious thraldom; when, by encouraging kindly affections, without analysing their source, we strengthen and fix them in the heart, and find their genial influence extending around, contributing to the happiness and well-being of others, and reflecting back some portion to ourselves, Byron's heart is running to waste for want of being allowed to expend itself on his fellow creatures; it is naturally capacious, and teeming with affection: but the worldly wisdom he has acquired has checked its course, and it preys on his own happiness by reminding him continually of the aching void in his breast. With a contemptible opinion of human nature, he requires a perfectibility in the persons to whom he attaches himself, that those who think most highly of it never expect: he gets easily disgusted, and when once the persons fall short of his expectations, his feelings are thrown back on himself, and,

in their re-action, create new bitterness. I have remarked to Byron that it strikes me as a curious anomaly, that he, who thinks ill of mankind, should require more from it than do those who think well of it *en masse;* and that each new disappointment at discovery of baseness sends him back to solitude with some of the feelings with which a savage creature would seek its lair; while those who judge it more favorably, instead of feeling bitterness at the disappointments we must all experience, more or less, when we have the weakness to depend wholly on others for happiness, smile at their own delusion, and blot out, as with a sponge, from memory that such things were, and were most sweet while we believed them, and open a fresh account, a new leaf in the leger of life, always indulging in the hope that it may not be balanced like the last. We should judge others not by self, for that is deceptive, but by their general conduct and character. We rarely do this, because that with *le besoin d'aimer*, which all ardent minds have, we bestow our affections on the first person that chance throws in our path, and endow them with every good and noble quality, which qualities were unknown to them, and only existed in our own imaginations. We discover, when too late our own want of discrimination; but, instead of blaming ourselves, we throw the whole censure on those whom we had overrated, and declare war against the whole species because we had chosen ill, and "loved not wisely, but too well." When such disappointments occur—and, alas! they are so frequent as to inure us to them—if we were to reflect on all the antecedent conduct and modes of thinking of those in whom we had "garnered up our hearts," we should find that *they* were in general consistent, and that *we* had indulged erroneous expectations, from having formed too high an estimate of them, and consequently were disappointed.

A modern writer has happily observed that "the sourest disappointments are made out of our sweetest hopes, as the most excellent vinegar is made from damaged wine." We have all proved that hope ends but in frustration, but this should only give us a more humble opinion of our own powers of discrimination, instead of making us think ill of human nature: we may believe that goodness, disinterestedness, and affection exist in the world, although we have not had the good fortune to encounter them in the persons on whom we had lavished our regard. This is the best, because it is the safest and most consolatory philosophy; it prevents our thinking ill of our species, and precludes that corroding of our feelings which is the inevitable result; for as we all belong to the family of human nature, we cannot think ill of it without deteriorating our own. If we have had the misfortune to meet with some persons whose ingratitude and baseness might serve to lower our opinion of our fellow-creatures, have we not encountered others whose nobleness, generosity, and truth might redeem them? A few such examples—nay, one alone—such as I have the happiness to know, has taught me to judge favorably of mankind; and Byron, with all his scepticism as to the perfectibility of human nature, allowed, that the person to whom I allude was an exception to the rule of the belief he had formed as to the selfishness or worldly-mindedness being the spring of action in man.

The grave has closed over *him* who shook Byron's scepticism in perfect goodness, and established for ever my implicit faith in it; but, in the debts of gratitude engraved in deep characters on memory, the impression his virtues have given me of human nature is indelibly registered—an impression of which his conduct was the happiest illustration, as the recollection of it must ever be the antidote to misanthrophy. We have need of such examples to reconcile us to the heartless ingratitude that all have, in a greater or less degree, been exposed to, and which is so calculated to disgust us with our species. How, then, must the heart reverence the memory of those who, in life, spread the shield of their goodness between us and sorrow and evil, and, even in death, have left us the hallowed recollection of their virtues, to enable us to think well of our fellow-creatures!

> Of the the rich legacies the dying leave,
> Remembrance of their virtues is the best.

We are as posterity to those who have gone before us—the *avant-coureurs* on that journey that we must all undertake. It is permitted us to speak of *absent* friends with the honest warmth of commendatory truth; then surely we may claim that privilege for the *dead*—a privilege which every grateful heart must pant to establish, when the just tribute we pay to departed worth is but as the outpourings of a spirit that is overpowered by its own intensity,

and whose praise or blame falls equally unregarded on "the dull cold ear of death." They who are in the grave cannot be flattered; and if their qualities were such as escaped the observance of the public eye, are not those who, in the shade of domestic privacy, had opportunities of appreciating them, entitled to one of the few consolations left to survivors—that of offering the homage of admiration and praise to virtues that were beyond all praise, and goodness that, while in existence, proved a source of happiness, and, in death, a consolation, by the assurance they have given of meeting their reward!

Byron said to-day that he had met, in a French writer, an idea that had amused him very much and that he thought had as much truth as originality in it: he quoted the passage, "La curiosité est suicide de sa nature, et l'amour n'est que la curiosité." He laughed, and rubbed his hands, and repeated, "Yes, the Frenchman is right. Curiosity kills itself; and love is only curiosity, as is proved by its end."

I told Byron that it was in vain that he affected to believe what he repeated, as I thought too well of him to imagine him to be serious.

"At all events," said Byron, "you must admit that, of all passions, love is the most selfish. It begins, continues, and ends in selfishness. Who ever thinks of the happiness of the object apart from his own, or who attends to it? While the passion continues, the lover wishes the object of his attachment happy, because, were she visibly otherwise, it would detract from his own pleasures. The French writer understood mankind well, who said that they resembled the grand Turk in an opera, who, quitting his sultana for another, replied to her tears, 'Dissimulez votre peine, et respectez mes plaisirs.' This," continued Byron, "is but too true a satire on men; for when love is over,

> A few years older,
> Ah! how much colder
> He could behold her
> For whom he sigh'd!

"Depend on it, my doggrel rhymes have more truth than most that I have written. I have been told that love never exists without jealousy; if this be true, it proves that love must be founded on selfishness, for jealousy surely never proceeds from any other feeling than selfishness. We see that the person we like is pleased and happy in the society of some one else, and we prefer to see her unhappy with us, than to allow her to enjoy it: is not this selfish? Why is it," continued Byron, "that lovers are at first only happy in each other's society? It is, that their mutual flattery and egoism gratify their vanity; and not finding this stimulus elsewhere, they become dependent on each other for it. When they get better acquainted, and have exhausted all their compliments, without the power of creating or feeling any new illusions, or even continuing the old, they no longer seek each other's presence from preference; habit alone draws them together, and they drag on a chain that is tiresome to both, but which often neither has the courage to break. We have all a certain portion of love in our natures, which portion we invariably bestow on the object that most charms us, which, as invariably is, self; and though some degree of love may be extended to another, it is only because that other administers to our vanity; and the sentiment is but a reaction—a sort of electricity that emits the sparks with which we are charged to another body;—and when the retorts lose their power—which means, in plain sense, when the flattery of the recipient no longer gratifies us—and yawning, that fearful abyss in love, is visible, the passion is over. Depend on it," continued Byron, "the only love that never changes its object is self-love; and the disappointments it meets with make a more lasting impression than all others."

I told Byron that I expected him to morrow to disprove every word he had uttered to-day. He laughed, and declared that his profession of faith was contained in the verses, "Could love for ever;" that he wished he could think otherwise, but so it was.

Byron affects scepticism in love and friendship, and yet is, I am persuaded, capable of making great sacrifices for both. He has an unaccountable passion for misrepresenting his own feelings and motives, and exaggerates his defects more than any enemy could do: he is often angry because we do not believe all he says against himself, and would be, I am sure, delighted to meet some one credulous enough to give credence to all he asserts or insinuates with regard to his own misdoings.

If Byron were not a great poet, the charlatanism of affecting to be a Satanic character, in this our matter-of-fact nineteenth century, would be very amusing; but when the genius of the man is taken into account, it appears too ridiculous, and one feels

mortified at finding that he, who could elevate the thoughts of his readers to the empyrean, should fall below the ordinary standard of every-day life, by a vain and futile attempt to pass for something that all who know him rejoice that he is not; while, by his sublime genius and real goodness of heart, which are made visible every day, he establishes claims on the admiration and sympathy of mankind that few can resist. If he knew his own power, he would disdain such unworthy means of attracting attention, and trust to his merit for commanding it.

"I know not when I have been so much interested and amused," said Byron, "as in the perusal of ——— journal: it is one of the choicest productions I ever read, and is astonishing as being written by a minor, as I find he was under age when he penned it. The most piquant vein of pleasantry runs through it; the ridicules—and they are many—of our dear compatriots are touched with the pencil of a master; but what pleases me most is, that neither the reputation of man nor woman is compromised, nor any disclosures made that could give pain. He has admirably penetrated the secret of English *ennui*," continued Byron, "a secret that is one to the English only, as I defy any foreigner, blessed with a common share of intelligence, to come in contact with them without discovering it. The English know that they are *ennuyés*, but vanity prevents their discovering that they are *ennuyeux*, and they will be little disposed to pardon the person who enlightens them on this point. ——— ——— ought to publish this work," continued Byron, "for two reasons: the first, that it will be sure to get known that he has written a piquant journal, and people will imagine it to be a malicious libel, instead of being a playful satire, as the English are prone to fancy the worst, from a consciousness of not meriting much forbearance; the second reason is, that the impartial view of their foibles, taken by a stranger who cannot be actuated by any of the little jealousies that influence the members of their own coteries, might serve to correct them, though I fear *réflexione faite*, there is not much hope of this. It is an extraordinary anomaly," said Byron, "that people who are really naturally inclined to good, as I believe the English are, and who have the advantages of a better education than foreigners receive, should practise more ill-nature and display more heartlessness than the inhabitants of any other country. This is all the effect of the artificial state of society in England, and the exclusive system has increased the evils of it tenfold. We accuse the French of frivolity," continued Byron, "because they are governed by *fashion;* but this extends only to their dress, whereas the English allow it to govern their pursuits, habits, and modes of thinking and acting: in short, it is the Alpha and Omega of all they think, do, or will: their society, residences, nay, their very friends, are chosen by this criterion, and old and tried friends, wanting its stamp, are voted *de trop*. Fashion admits women of more than dubious reputations, and well-born men with none, into circles where virtue and honor, not *à la mode*, might find it difficult to get placed; and if (on hearing the reputation of Lady This, or Mrs. That, or rather want of reputation, canvassed over by their associates) you ask why they are received, you will be told it is because they are seen every where —they are the fashion.—I have known," continued Byron, "men and women in London received in the first circles, who, by their birth, talents, or manners, had no one claim to such a distinction, merely because they had been seen in one or two houses, to which, by some manœuvring, they got the *entrée;* but I must add, they were not remarkable for good looks, or superiority in any way, for if they had been, it would have elicited attention to their want of other claims, and closed the doors of fashion against them. I recollect," said Byron, "on my first entering fashionable life, being surprised at the (to me) unaccountable distinctions I saw made between ladies placed in peculiar and precisely similar situations. I have asked some of the fair leaders of fashion, 'Why do you exclude Lady ——, and admit Lady ——, as they are both in the same scrape?' With that amiable indifference to cause and effect that distinguishes the generality of your sex, the answer has invariably been, 'Oh! we admit Lady ——— because all our set receive her; and exclude Lady ——— because they will not.' I have pertinaciously demanded, 'Well, but you allow their claims are equal?' and the reply has been, 'Certainly; and we believe the excluded lady to be the better of the two.' *Mais que voulez-vous?* she is not received, and the other is; it is all chance or luck: and this," continued Byron, "is the state of society in London, and such the line of demarcation drawn between the pure and the impure, when chance or luck, as Lady ——— honestly owned to me, decided whether a woman lost her caste or

not. I am not much of a prude," said Byron, "but I declare that, for the general good, I think that all women who had forfeited their reputations ought to lose their places in society; but this rule ought never to admit of an exception: it becomes an injustice and hardship when it does, and loses all effect as a warning or preventive. I have known young married women, when cautioned by friends on the probability of losing caste by such or such a step, quote the examples of Lady This, or Mrs. That, who had been more imprudent, (for imprudence is the new name for guilt in England,) and yet that one saw these ladies received every where, and vain were precepts with such examples. People may suppose," continued Byron, "that I respect not morals, because unfortunately I have sometimes violated them: perhaps from this very circumstance I respect them the more, as we never value riches until our prodigality has made us feel their loss; and a lesson of prudence coming from him who had squandered thousands, would have more weight than whole pages written by one who had not personal experience: so I maintain that persons who have *erred* are most competent to point out errors. It is my respect for morals that makes me so indignant against its vile substitute cant, with which I wage war, and this the good-natured world chooses to consider as a sign of my wickedness. We are all the creatures of circumstance," continued Byron; "the greater part of our errors are caused, if not excused, by events and situations over which we have had little control; the world see the faults, but they see not what led to them: therefore I am always lenient to crimes that have brought their own punishment, while I am a little disposed to pity those who think they atone for their own sins by exposing those of others, and add cant and hypocrisy to the catalogue of their vices. Let not a woman who has gone astray, *without detection*, affect to disdain a less fortunate, though not more culpable, female. She who is unblemished should pity her who has fallen, and she whose conscience tells her she is not spotless should show forbearance; but it enrages me to see women whose conduct is, or has been, infinitely more blameable than that of the persons they denounce, affecting a prudery towards others that they had not in the hour of need for themselves. It was this forbearance towards her own sex that charmed me in Lady Melbourne: she had always some kind interpretation for every action that would admit of one, and pity or silence when aught else was impracticable.

"Lady ——, beautiful and spotless herself, always struck me as wanting that pity she could so well afford. Not that I ever thought her ill-natured or spiteful; but I thought there was a certain severity in her demarcations, which her acknowledged purity rendered less necessary. Do you remember my lines in the Giaour, ending with—

> No: gayer insects fluttering by
> Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die;
> And lovelier things have mercy shown
> To every failing but their own;
> And every wo a tear can claim
> Except an erring sister's shame.

"These lines were suggested by the conduct I witnessed in London from women to their erring acquaintances—a conduct that led me to draw the conclusion, that their hearts are formed of less penetrable stuff than those of men."

Byron has not lived sufficiently long in England, and has left it at too young an age, to be able to form an impartial and just estimate of his compatriots. He was a busy actor, more than a spectator, in the circles which had given him an unfavorable impression; and his own passions were, at that period, too much excited to permit his reason to be unbiassed in the opinions he formed. In his hatred of what he calls cant, and hypocrisy, he is apt to denounce as such all that has the air of severity; and which, though often painful in individual cases, is, on the whole, salutary for the general good of society. This error of Byron's proceeds from a want of actual personal observation, for which opportunity has not been afforded him, as the brief period of his residence in England, after he had arrived at an age to judge, and the active part he took in the scenes around him, allowed him not to acquire that perfect knowledge of society, manners, and customs, which is necessary to correct the prejudices that a superficial acquaintance with it is apt to engender, even in the most acute observer, but to which a powerful imagination, prompt to jump at conclusions, without pausing to trace cause and effect, is still more likely to fall into. Byron sees not that much of what he calls the usages of cant and hypocrisy are the fences that protect propriety, and that they cannot be invaded without exposing what it is the interest of all to preserve. Had he been a calm looker-on, instead of an impassioned actor in the drama of English

fashionable life, he would probably have taken a less harsh view of all that has so much excited his ire, and felt the necessity of many of the restraints which fettered him.

A two year's residence in Greece, with all the freedom and personal independence that a desultory rambling life admits of and gives a taste for—in a country where civilisation has so far retrograded that its wholesome laws, as well as its refinement, have disappeared, leaving license to usurp the place of liberty—was little calculated to prepare a young man of three-and-twenty for the conventional habits and restraints of that artificial state of society which extreme civilisation and refinement beget. No wonder then that it soon became irksome to him, and that, like the unbroken courser of Arabia, when taken from the deserts where he had sported in freedom, he spurned the puny meshes which ensnared him, and pined beneath the trammels that intercepted his liberty.

Byron returned to England in his twenty-third year, and left it before he had completed his twenty-eighth, soured by disappointments and rendered reckless by a sense of injuries. "He who fears not is to be feared," says the proverb; and Byron, wincing under all the obloquy which malice and envy could inflict, felt that its utmost malignity could go no farther, and became fixed in a fearless braving of public opinion, which a false spirit of vengeance led him to indulge in, turning the genius, that could have achieved the noblest ends, into the means of accomplishing those which were unworthy of it. His attacks on the world are like the war of the Titans against the gods—the weapons he aims fall back on himself. He feels that he has allowed sentiments of pique to influence and deteriorate his works; and that the sublime passages in them, which now appear like gleams of sunshine flitting across the clouds that sometimes obscure the bright luminary, might have been one unbroken blaze of light, had not worldly resentment and feelings dimmed their lustre.

This consciousness of misapplied genius has made itself felt in Byron, and will yet lead him to redeem the injustice he has done it; and when he has won the guerdon of the world's applause, and satisfied that craving for celebrity which consumes him, reconciled to that world, and at peace with himself, he may yet win as much esteem for the man as he has hitherto elicited admiration for the poet. To satisfy Byron, the admiration must be unqualified; and, as I have told him, this depends on himself: he has only to choose a subject for his muse, in which not only received opinions are not wounded, but morality is inculcated; and his glowing genius, no longer tarnished by the stains that have previously blemished it, will shine forth with a splendor, and insure that universal applause, which will content even his ambitious and aspiring nature. He wants some one to tell him what he *might* do, what he *ought* to do, and what so doing he would become. I have told him: but I have not sufficient weight or influence with him to make my representations effective; and the task would be delicate and difficult for a male friend to undertake, as Byron is pertinacious in refusing to admit that his works have failed in morality, though in his heart I am sure he feels it.

Talking of some one who was said to have fallen in love, "I suspect," said Byron, "that he must be indebted to your country for this phrase, 'falling in love;' it is expressive and droll: they also say falling ill; and, as both are involuntary, and in general, equally calamitous, the expressions please me. Of the two evils, the falling ill seems to be the least; at all events I would prefer it; for as, according to philosophers, pleasure consists in the absence of pain, the sensations of returning health (if one does recover) must be agreeable; but the recovery from love is another affair, and resembles the awaking from an agreeable dream. Hearts are often only lent, when they are supposed to be given away," continued Byron; "and are the loans for which people exact the most usurious interest. When the debt is called in, the borrower, like all other debtors, feels little obligation to the lender, and, having refunded the principal, regrets the interest he has paid. You see," said Byron, "that, *à l'Anglaise*, I have taken a mercantile view of the tender passion; but I must add that, in closing the accounts, they are seldom fairly balanced, 'e ciò sa'l tuo dotore.' There is this difference between the Italians and others," said Byron, "that the end of love is not with them the beginning of hatred, which certainly is, in general, the case with the English, and, I believe, the French: this may be accounted for from their having less vanity; which is also the reason why they have less ill-nature in

their compositions; for vanity, being always on the *qui vive*, up in arms, ready to resent the least offence offered to it, precludes good temper."

I asked Byron if his partiality for the Italians did not induce him to overlook other and obvious reasons for their not beginning to hate when they ceased to love: first the attachments were of such long duration that age arrived to quell angry feelings, and the gradations were so slow, from the first sigh of love to the yawn of expiring affection, as to be almost imperceptible to the parties; and the system of domesticating in Italy established a habit that rendered them necessary to each other. Then the slavery of *serventism*, the jealousies, carried to an extent that is unknown in England, and which exists longer than the passion that is supposed to excite, if not excuse, them, may tend to reconcile lovers to the exchange of friendship for love; and rejoicing in their recovered liberty, they are more disposed to indulge feelings of complacency than hatred.

Byron said, "Whatever may be the cause, they have reason to rejoice in the effect; and one is never afraid in Italy of inviting people together who have been known to have once had warmer feelings than friendship towards each other, as is the case in England, where, if persons under such circumstances were to meet, angry glances and a careful avoidance of civility, would mark their kind sentiments towards each other."

I asked Byron if what he attributed to the effects of wounded vanity might not proceed from other and better feelings, at least on the part of women? Might not shame and remorse be the cause? The presence of the man who had caused their dereliction from duty and virtue calling up both, could not be otherwise than painful and humiliating to women who were not totally destitute of delicacy and feeling; and that this most probably was the cause of the coldness he observed between persons of opposite sexes in society.

"You are always thinking of and reasoning on the *English*, (answered Byron): mind, I refer to Italians, and with them there can be neither shame nor remorse, because, in yielding to love, they do not believe they are violating either their duty or religion; consequently a man has none of the reproaches to dread that awaits him in England when a lady's conscience is *awakened*—which, by the by, I have observed it seldom is until *affection* is laid asleep, which, (continued Byron,) is very convenient to herself, but very much the reverse to the unhappy man."

I am sure that much of what Byron said in this conversation was urged to vex me. Knowing my partiality to England and all that is English, he has a childish delight in exciting me into an argument; and as I as yet know nothing of Italy, except through books, he takes advantage of his long residence in, and knowledge of the country, to vaunt the superiority of its customs and usages, which I never can believe he prefers to his own. A wish of vexing or astonishing the English is, I am persuaded, the motive that induces him to attack Shakspeare; and he is highly gratified when he succeeds in doing either, and enjoys it like a child. He says that the reason why he judges the English women so severely is, that being brought up with certain principles, they are doubly to blame in not making their conduct accord with them; and that, while punishing with severity the transgressions of persons of their own sex in humble positions, they look over the more glaring misconduct and vices of the rich and great—that not the crime, but its detection, is punished in England, and, to avoid this, hypocrisy is added to a want of virtue.

"You have heard, of course, (said Byron,) that I was considered mad in England; my most intimate friends in general, and Lady Byron in particular, were of this opinion: but it did not operate in my favor in their minds, as they were not, like the natives of eastern nations, disposed to pay honor to my supposed insanity or folly. They considered me a *mejnoun*, but would not treat me as one. And yet, had such been the case, what ought to excite such pity and forbearance as a mortal malady that reduces us to more than childishness—a prostration of intellect that places us in the dependence of even menial hands? Reason, (continued Byron) is so unreasonable, that few can say that they are in possession of it. I have often doubted my own sanity, and, what is more, wished for insanity—anything—to quell memory, the never-dying worm that feeds on the heart, and only calls up the *past* to make the *present* more insupportable. Memory has for me

> The vulture's ravenous tooth,
> The raven's funereal song.

There is one thing, (continued Byron,) that increases my discontent, and adds to

the rage that I often feel against self. It is the conviction that the events in life that have most pained me—that have turned the milk of my nature into gall—have not depended on the persons who tortured me—as I admit the causes were inadequate to the effects:—it was my own nature, prompt to receive painful impressions, and to retain them with a painful tenacity, that supplied the arms against my peace. Nay, more, I believe that the wounds inflicted were not, for the most part premeditated; or if so, that the extent and profundity of them were not anticipated by the persons who aimed them. There are some natures that have a predisposition to grief, as others have to disease; and such was my case. The causes that have made me wretched would probably not have discomposed, or, at least, more than discomposed another. We are all differently organised; and that I feel *acutely* is no more my fault (though it is my misfortune) than that another feels not, is his. We did not make ourselves: and if the elements of unhappiness abound more in the nature of one man than another, he is but the more entitled to our pity and forbearance. Mine is a nature," continued Byron, "that might have been softened and ameliorated by prosperity, but that has been hardened and soured by adversity." Prosperity and adversity are the fires by which moral chemists try and judge human nature; and how few can pass the ordeal! Prosperity corrupts and adversity renders ordinary nature callous: but when any portion of excellence exists, neither can injure. The first will expand the heart, and show forth every virtue, as the genial rays of the sun bring forth the fruit and flowers of the earth; and the second will teach sympathy for others, which is best learned in the school of affliction.

"I am persuaded (said Byron) that education has more effect in quelling the passions than people are aware of. I do not think this is achieved by the powers of reasoning and reflection that education is supposed to bestow; for I know by experience how little either can influence the person who is under the tyrant rule of passion. My opinion is that education, by expanding the mind, and giving sources of tasteful occupation, so fills up the time, that leisure is not left for the passions to gain that empire that they are sure to acquire over the idle and ignorant. Look at the lower orders, and see what fearful proofs they continually furnish of the unlimited power passion has over them. I have seen instances, and particularly in Italy, among the lower class, and of your sex, where the women seemed for the moment transformed into Medeas; and so ungoverned and ungovernable was their rage, that each appeared grand and tragic for the time, and furnished me, who am rather an amateur in studying nature under all her aspects, with food for reflection. Then the upper classes, too, in Italy, where the march of intellect has not advanced by rail-roads and steam-boats, as in polished, happy England; and where the women remain children in mind long after maturity had stamped their persons!—see one of their stately dames under the influence of the green-eyed monster, and one can believe that the Furies were not fabulous. This is amusing at first, but becomes, like most amusements, rather a bore at the end; and a poor *cavalier servente* must have more courage than falls to the share of most, who would not shut his eyes against the beauty of all *damas* but his own, rather than encounter an explosion of jealousy. But the devil of it is, there is hardly a possibility of avoiding it, as the Italian women are so addicted to jealousy, that the poor *serventi* are often accused of the worst intentions for merely performing the simple courtesies of life; so that the system of *serventism* imposes a thousand times more restraint and slavery than marriage ever imposed, even in the most moral countries: indeed, where the morals are the most respected and cultivated, (continued Byron,) there will be the least jealousy or suspicion, as morals are to the enlightened what religion is to the ignorant—their safeguard from committing wrong, or suspecting it. So you see, bad as I am supposed to be, I have, by this admission, proved the advantages of morals and religion.

"But to return to my opinion of the effect education has in extending the focus of ideas, and consequently, of curbing the intensity of the passions. I have remarked that well-educated women rarely, if ever, gave way to any ebullitions of them; and this is a grand step gained in conquering their empire, as habit in this, as well as in all else, has great power. I hope my daughter will be well educated; but of this I have little dread, as her mother is highly cultivated, and certainly has a degree of self-control that I never saw equalled. I am certain that Lady Byron's first idea is, what is due to herself; I mean that it is the undeviating rule of her

conduct. I wish she had thought a little more of what is due to others. Now my besetting sin is a want of that self-respect —which she has in *excess;* and that want has produced much unhappiness to us both. But though I accuse Lady Byron of an excess of self-respect, I must in candor admit, that if any person ever had an excuse for an extraordinary portion of it, she has; as in all her thoughts, words, and deeds, she is the most decorous woman that ever existed and must appear—what few, I fancy, could—a perfect refined gentlewoman, even to her *femme-de-chambre.* This extraordinary degree of self-command in Lady Byron produced an opposite effect on me. When I have broken out, on slight provocations, into one of my ungovernable fits of rage, her calmness piqued and seemed to reproach me; it gave her an air of superiority that vexed, and increased my *mauvais humeur.* I am now older and wiser; and should know how to appreciate her conduct as it deserved, as I look on self-command as a positive virtue, though it is one I have not courage to adopt."

Talking of his proposed expedition to Greece, Byron said that, as the moment approached for undertaking it, he almost wished he had never thought of it. "This (said Byron) is one of the many scrapes into which my poetical temperament has drawn me. You smile; but it is nevertheless true. No man, or woman either, with such a temperament, can be quiet. Passion is the element in which we live; and without it we but vegetate. All the passions have governed me in turn, and I have found them the veriest tyrants;—like all slaves, I have reviled my masters, but submitted to the yoke they imposed. I had hoped (continued Byron) that avarice, that old gentlemanly vice, would, like Aaron's serpent, have swallowed up all the rest in me; and that now I am descending into the vale of years, I might have found pleasure in golden realities, as in youth I found it in golden dreams, (and let me tell you, that, of all the passions, this same decried *avarice* is the most consolatory, and, in nine cases out of ten, lasts the longest, and is the latest,) when up springs a new passion—call it love of liberty, military ardor, or what you will—to disgust me with my strong box, and the comfortable contemplation of my *moneys*—nay, to create wings for my golden darlings, that may waft me away from them for ever, and I may awaken to find that this, my present ruling passion, as I have always found my last, was the most worthless of all, with the soothing reflection that it has left me *minus* some thousands. But I am fairly in for it, and it is useless to repine; but, I repeat, this scrape, which may be my last, has been caused by my poetical temperament—the devil take it, say I."

Byron was irresistibly comic when commenting on his own errors or weaknesses. His face, half laughing and half serious, archness always predominating in its expression, added peculiar force to his words.

"Is it not pleasant (continued Byron) that my eyes should never open to the folly of any of the undertakings passion prompts me to engage in, until I am so far embarked that retreat (at least with honor) is impossible, and my *mal à propos sagesse* arrives, to scare away the enthusiasm that led to the undertaking, and which is so requisite to carry it on? It is all an up-hill affair with me afterwards: I cannot, for my life, *échauffer* my imagination again; and my position excites such ludicrous images and thoughts in my own mind, that the whole subject, which, seen through the veil of passion, looked fit for a sublime epic, and I one of its heroes, examined now through reason's glass, appears fit only for a travestie, and my poor self a Major Sturgeon, marching and counter-marching, not from Acton to Ealing, or from Ealing to Acton, but from Corinth to Athens, and from Athens to Corinth. Yet, hang it, (continued he,) these very names ought to chase away every idea of the ludicrous; but the laughing devils will return, and make a mockery of every thing, as with me there is, as Napoleon said, but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. Well, *if I do* (and this *if* is a grand *peut-être* in my future history) outlive the campaign, I shall write two poems on the subject—one an epic, and the other a burlesque, in which none shall be spared, and myself least of all: indeed, you must allow (continued Byron) that if I take liberties with my friends, I take still greater ones with myself; therefore they ought to bear with me, if only out of consideration for my impartiality. I am also determined to write a poem in praise of avarice, (said Byron,) as I think it a most ill-used and unjustly decried passion—mind, I do not call it a vice—and I hope to make it clear that a passion which enables us to conquer the appetites, or, at least, the indulgence of them; that triumphs over pride, vanity, and ostentation; that leads us to the prac-

tice of daily self-denial. temperance, sobriety, and a thousand other praiseworthy practices, ought not to be censured, more especially as all the sacrifices it commands are endured without any weak feeling of reference to others, though to others all the reward of such sacrifices belongs."

Byron laughed very much at the thought of this poem, and the censures it would excite in England among the matter-of-fact, credulous class of readers and writers. Poor Byron! how much more pains did he bestow to take off the gloss from his own qualities, than others do to give theirs a false lustre! In his hatred and contempt of hypocrisy and cant, he outraged his own nature, and rendered more injustice to himself than even his enemies ever received at his hands. His confessions of errors were to be received with caution; for he exaggerated not only his misdeeds but his opinions; and, fond of tracing springs of thought to their sources, he involved himself in doubts, to escape from which he boldly attributed to himself motives and feelings that had passed, but like shadows, through his mind, and left unrecorded, mementos that might have redeemed even more than the faults of which he accused himself. When the freedom with which Byron remarked on the errors of his friends draws down condemnation from his readers, let them reflect on the still greater severity with which he treated his own, and let this mistaken and exaggerated candor plead his excuse.

"It is odd, (said Byron) that I never could get on well in conversation with literary men: they always seemed to think themselves obliged to pay some neat and appropriate compliment to my last work, which I, as in duty bound, was compelled to respond to, and bepraise theirs. They never appeared quite satisfied with my faint praise, and I was far from being satisfied at having been forced to administer it; so mutual constraint ensued, each wondering what was to come next, and wishing each other (at least I can answer for myself) at the devil. Now Scott, though a giant in literature, is unlike literary men; he neither expects complimenis nor pays them in conversation. There is a sincerity and simplicity in his character and manner that stamp any commendation of his as truth, and any praise one might offer him must fall short of his deserts; so that there is no *gêne* in his society. There is nothing in him that gives the impression I have so often had of others, who seemed to say, 'I praise you that you may do the same by me.' Moore is a delightful companion, (continued Byron;) gay without being boisterous, witty without effort, comic without coarseness, and sentimental without being lachrymose. He reminds one (continued Byron) of the fairy, who, whenever she spoke, let diamonds fall from her lips. My *tête-a-tête* suppers with Moore are among the most agreeable impressions I retain of the hours passed in London: they are the redeeming lights in the gloomy picture; but they were,

Like angel visits, few and far between;

for the great defect in my friend Tom is a sort of fidgety unsettledness that prevents his giving himself up, *con amore*, to any one friend, because he is apt to think he might be more happy with another: he has the organ of locomotiveness largely developed, as a phrenologist would say, and would like to be at three places instead of one. I always felt, with Moore, the desire Johnson expressed, to be shut up in a postchaise, *tête-à-tête* with a pleasant companion, to be quite sure of him. He must be delightful in a country-house, at a safe distance from any other inviting one, when one could have him really to oneself, and enjoy his conversation and his singing, without the perpetual fear that he is expected at Lady This or Lady That's, or the being reminded that he promised to look in at Lansdowne House or Grosvenor Square. The wonder is, *not* that he is *récherché*, but that he wastes himself on those who can so little appreciate him, though they value the *éclat* his reputation gives to their stupid *soirées*. I have known a dull man live on a *bon mot* of Moore's for a week; and I once offered a wager of a considerable sum that the reciter was *guiltless* of understanding its point, but could get no one to accept my bet.

"Are you acquainted with the family of ——? (asked Byron.) The commendation formerly bestowed on the Sidney family might be reversed for them, as all the sons are virtuous, and all the daughters brave. I once (continued he) said this with a grave face to a near relation of theirs: who received it as a compliment, and told me I was very good. I was in old times fond of mystifying, and paying equivocal compliments; but 'was is not is' with me, as God knows, in any sense, for I am now cured of mystifying, as well as of many others of my mischievous pranks: whether I am a *better* man for my self-cor-

rection remains to be proved; I am quite sure that I am not a more agreeable one. I have always had a strong love of mischief in my nature, (said Byron,) and this still continues, though I do not very often give way to its dictates. It is this lurking devil that prompts me to abuse people against whom I have not the least malicious feeling, and to praise some whose merits (if they have any) I am little acquainted with; but I do it in the mischievous spirit of the moment to vex the person or persons with whom I am conversing. Is not this very childish? (continued Byron;) and, above all, for a poet, which people tell me I am? All I know is, that if I am, poets can be greater fools than other people. We of the craft—poets, I mean—resemble paper kites; we soar high into the air, but are held to earth by a cord, and our flight is restrained by a child—that child is self. We are but grown children, having all their weakness, and only wanting their innocence; our thoughts soar, but the frailty of our natures brings them back to earth. What should we be without thoughts? (continued Byron;) they are the bridges by which we pass over time and space. And yet, perhaps, like troops flying before the enemy, we are often tempted to destroy the bridges we have passed, to save ourselves from pursuit. How often have I tried to shun thought! but come, I must not get gloomy; my thoughts are almost always of the sombre hue, so that I ought not to be blamed (said he, laughing,) if I steal those of others, as I am accused of doing; I cannot have any more disagreeable ones than my own, at least as far as they concern myself.

"In all the charges of plagiary brought against me in England, (said Byron,) did you hear me accused of stealing from Madame de Staël the opening lines of my 'Bride of Abydos?' She is supposed to have borrowed her lines from Schlegel, or to have stolen them from Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister;' so you see I am a third or fourth hand stealer of stolen goods. Do you know de Staël's lines? (continued Byron;) for if I am a thief, she must be the plundered, as I don't read German, and do French; yet I could almost swear that I never saw her verses when I wrote mine, nor do I even now remember them. I think the first began with 'Cette terre,' &c. &c. but the rest I forget; as you have a good memory, perhaps you would repeat them."

I did so, and they are as follows:

— Cette terre, où les myrtes fleurissent,
Où les rayons des cieux tombent avec amour,
Où des sons enchanteurs dans les airs retentissent,
Où la plus douce nuit succède au plus beau jour.

"Well, (said Byron) I do not see any point of resemblance, except in the use of the two unfortunate words land and myrtle, and for using these new and original words I am a plagiarist! To avoid such charges, I must invent a dictionary for myself. Does not this charge prove the liberal spirit of the hypercritics in England? If they knew how little I value their observations, or the opinions of those that they can influence, they would be perhaps more spiteful, and certainly more careful in producing better proofs of their charges; the one of de Staël's I consider a triumphant refutation for me.

"I often think (said Byron) that were I to return to England, I should be considered, in certain circles, as having a *très mauvais ton*, for I have been so long out of it that I have learned to say what I think, instead of saying only what, by the rules of convenience, people are permitted to think. For though England tolerates the liberty of the press, it is far from tolerating liberty of thought or of speech; and since the progress of modern refinement, when delicacy of words is as remarkable as in delicacy of actions, a plain-speaking man is sure to get into a scrape. Nothing amuses me more than to see refinement *versus* morals, and to know that people are shocked *not* at crimes, but their detection. The Spartan boy, who suffered the animal he had secured by theft to pray on his vitals, evinced not more constancy in concealing his sufferings than do the English in suppressing all external symptoms of what they must feel, and on many occasions, when Nature makes herself felt through the expression of her feelings, would be considered almost as a crime. But I believe crime is a word banished from the vocabulary of *haut-ton*, as the vices of the rich and great are called errors, and those of the poor and lowly only, crimes.

"Do you know ——? (asked Byron.) He is the king of prosers. I called him 'he of the thousand tales,' in humble imitation of Boccaccio, whom I styled 'he of the hundred tales of love:'—*mais hélas!* ——'s are not tales of love, or that beget love; they are born of dulness, and inciting sleep, they produce the same effect on the senses that the monotonous sound of a waterfall never fails to have on mine. With —— one is afraid to speak, because whatever is said is sure to bring forth a remi-

niscence, that as surely leads to interminable recollections,

Dull as the dreams of him who swills vile beer.

Thus, (continued Byron.) ——— is so honorable and well-intentioned a man that one can find nothing bad to say of him, except that he is a bore; and as there is no law against that class of offenders, one must bear with him. It is to be hoped, that, with all the modern improvements in refinement, a mode will be discovered of getting rid of bores, for it is too bad that a poor wretch can be punished for stealing your pocket handkerchief or gloves, and that no punishment can be inflicted on those who steal your time, and with it your temper and patience, as well as the bright thoughts that might have entered into the mind, (like the Irishman who lost a fortune before he had got it,) but were frighted away by the bore. Nature certainly (said Byron) has not dealt charitably by ———, for, independent of his being the king of prosers, he is the ugliest person possible, and when he talks, breathes not of Araby the blest: his heart is good, but the stomach is none of the best, judging from its exhalations. His united merits led me to attempt an epigram on them, which, I believe, is as follows:—

When conversing with ———, who can disclose
Which suffers the most—eyes, ears, or the nose?

"I repeated this epigram (continued Byron) to him as having been made on a mutual friend of ours, and he enjoyed it, as we all do some hit on a friend. I have known people who were incapable of saying the least unkind word against friends, and yet who listened with evident (though attempted to be suppressed) pleasure to the malicious jokes or witty sarcasms of others against them; a proof that, even in the best people, some taints of the original evil of our natures remain. You think I am wrong (continued Byron) in my estimate of human nature; you think I analyse my own evil qualities and those of others too closely, and judge them too severely. I have need of self-examination to reconcile me to all the incongruities I discover, and to make me more lenient to faults that my tongue censures, but that my heart pardons, from the consciousness of its own weakness."

We should all do well to reflect on the frailty of man, if it led us more readily to forgive his faults, and cherish his virtues; the one, alas! are inextirpable, but the others are the victories gained over that most difficult to be conquered of all assailants—self; to which victory, if we do not decree a triumph, we ought to grant an ovation, but, unhappily, the contemplation of human frailty is too apt to harden the heart, and oftener creates disgust than humility. "When we dwell on vices with mockery and bitterness, instead of pity, we may doubt the efficacy of our contemplation; and this," said I to Byron "seems to me to be your case; for when I hear your taunting reflections on the discoveries you make in poor, erring human nature; when you have explored and exposed every secret recess of the heart, you appear to me like a fallen angel, sneering at the sins of men, instead of a fellow man pitying them. This it is that makes me think you analyse too deeply; and I would at present lead you to reflect only on the good that still remains in the world—for be assured there is much good, as an antidote to the evil that you know of."

Byron laughed, and said, "You certainly do not spare me; but you manage to wrap up your censures in an envelop almost complimentary, and that reconciles me to their bitterness, as children are induced to take physic by its being disguised in some sweet substance. The fallen angel is so much more agreeable than demon, as others have called me, that I am rather flattered than affronted; I ought, in return, to say something *très aimable* to you, in which angelic at least might be introduced, but I will not, as I never can compliment those that I esteem.—But to return to self; —you know that I have been called not only a demon, but a French poet has addressed me as *chantre d'enfer*, which, I suppose, he thinks very flattering. I dare say his poem will be done into English by some Attic resident, and, instead of a singer of hell, I shall be styled a hellish singer, and so go down to posterity."

He laughed at his own pun, and said he felt half disposed to write a quizzing answer to the French poet, in which he should mystify him.

"It is no wonder (said Byron) that I am considered a demon, when people have taken it into their heads that I am the hero of all my own tales in verse. They fancy one can only describe what has actually occurred to oneself, and forget the power that persons of any imagination possess of identifying themselves, for the time being, with the creations of their fancy. This is a peculiar distinction conferred on me, for

I have heard of no other poet who has been identified with his works. I saw the other day (said Byron) in one of the papers a fanciful simile about Moore's writings and mine. It stated that Moore's poems appeared as if they ought to be written with crow-quills, on rose-colored paper, stamped with Cupids and flowers; and mine on asbestos, written by quills from the wing of an eagle:—you laugh, but I think this is a very sublime comparison—at least, so far as I am concerned—it quite consoles me for 'chantre d'enfer.' By the by, the French poet is neither a philosopher nor a logician: as he dubs me by this title merely because I doubt that there is an *enfer*—ergo, I cannot be styled the *chantre* of a place of which I doubt the existence. I dislike French verse so much (said Byron) that I have not read more than a few lines of the one in which I am dragged into public view. He calls me, (said Byron) 'Esprit mystérieux, mortel, ange ou démon;' which I call very uncivil, for a well-bred Frenchman, and moreover one of the craft: I wish he would let me and my works alone, for I am sure I do not trouble him or his, and should not know that he existed, except from his notice of me which some good-natured friend has sent me. There are some things in the world, of which, like gnats, we are only reminded of the existence by their stinging us; this was his position with me."

Had Byron read the whole of the poem addressed to him by M. de Lamartine, he would have been more flattered than offended by it, as it is not only full of beauty, but the admiration for the genius of the English poet, which pervades every sentiment of the ode, is so profound, that the epithet which offended the morbid sensitiveness of Byron would have been readily pardoned. M. de Lamartine is perhaps the only French poet who could have so justly appreciated, and gracefully eulogised, our wayward child of genius; and having written so successfully himself, his praise is more valuable. His "Meditations" possess a depth of feeling which, tempered by a strong religious sentiment that makes the Christian rise superior to the philosopher, bears the impress of a true poetical temperament, which could not fail to sympathise with all the *feelings*, however he might differ from the *reasonings* of Byron. Were the works of the French poet better known to the English bard he could not, with even all his dislike to French poetry, have refused his approbation to the writings of M. de Lamartine.

Talking of solitude—"It has but one disadvantage (said Byron,) but that is a serious one—it is apt to give one too high an opinion of oneself. In the world we are sure to be often reminded of every known or supposed defect we may have: hence we can rarely, unless possessed of an inordinate share of vanity, form a very exalted opinion of ourselves, and, in society, wo be to him who lets it be known that he thinks more highly of himself than of his neighbors, as this is a crime that arms every one against him. This was the rock on which Napoleon foundered; he had so often wounded the *amour propre* of others, that they were glad to hurl him from the eminence that made him appear a giant and those around him pigmies. If a man or woman has any striking superiority, some great defect or weakness must be discovered to counterbalance it, that their contemporaries may console themselves for their envy, by saying, 'Well, if I have not the genius of Mr. This, or the beauty or talent of Mrs. That, I have not the violent temper of the one, or the overweening vanity of the other.' But, to return to solitude, (said Byron,) it is the only fool's paradise on earth: there we have no one to remind us of our faults, or by whom we can be humiliated by comparisons! Our evil passions sleep, because they are not excited; our productions appear sublime, because we have no kind and judicious friend to hint at their defects, and to point out faults of style and imagery where we had thought ourselves most luminous: these are the advantages of solitude, and those who have once tasted them, can never return to the busy world again with any zest for its feverish enjoyments. In the world (said Byron) I am always irritable and violent; the very noise of the streets of a populous city affect my nerves: I seemed in a London house 'cabined, cribbed, confined, and felt like a tiger in too small a cage:' apropos of tigers, did you ever observe that all people in a violent rage, walk up and down the place they are in, as wild beasts do in their dens? I have particularly remarked this, (continued he,) and it proved to me, what I never doubted, that we have much of the animal and the ferocious in our natures, which, I am convinced, is increased by an over-indulgence of our carnivorous propensities. It has been said that, to enjoy solitude, a man must be superlatively good or bad: I deny this, because there are no superlatives in man—all are comparative or relative; but, had I

no other reason to deny it, my own experience would furnish me with one. God knows I never flattered myself with the idea of being superlatively good, as no one better knows his faults than I do mine; but, at the same time, I am as unwilling to believe that I am superlatively bad, yet I enjoy solitude more than I ever enjoyed society, even in my most youthful days."

I told Byron, that I expected he would one day give the world a collection of useful aphorisms, drawn from personal experience. He laughed and said—"Perhaps I may; those are best suited to advise others who have missed the road themselves, and this has been my case. I have found friends false—acquaintances malicious—relations indifferent—and nearer and dearer connections perfidious. Perhaps much, if not all this, has been caused by my own waywardness; but that has not prevented my feeling it keenly. It has made me look on friends as partakers of prosperity—censurers in adversity—and absentees in distress; and has forced me to view acquaintances merely as persons who think themselves justified in courting or cutting one, as best suits them. But relations I regard only as people privileged to tell disagreeable truths, and to accept weighty obligations, as matters of course. You have now (continued Byron) my unsophisticated opinion of friends, acquaintances, and relations; of course there are always exceptions, but they are rare, and exceptions do not make the rule. All that I have said are but reiterated truisms that all admit to be just, but that few, if any, act upon; they are like the death-bell that we hear toll for others, without thinking that it must soon toll for us; we know that others have been deceived, but we believe that we are either too clever, or too *loveable*, to meet the same fate: we see our friends drop daily around us, many of them younger and healthier than ourselves, yet we think that we shall live to be old, as if we possessed some stronger hold on life than those who have gone before us. Alas! life is but a dream from which we are only awakened by death. All else is illusion; changing as we change, and each cheating us in turn, until death withdraws the veil, and shows us the dread reality. It is strange (said Byron,) that feeling, as most people do, life a burthen, we should still cling to it with such pertinacity. This is another proof of animal feeling; for if the divine spirit that is supposed to animate us mastered the animal nature, should we not rejoice at laying down the load that has so long oppressed us, and beneath which we have groaned for years, to seek a purer, brighter existence? Who ever reached the age of twenty-five (continued Byron) without feeling the *tædium vitæ* which poisons the little enjoyment that we are allowed to taste? We begin life with the hope of attaining happiness; soon discovering that to be unattainable, we seek pleasure as a poor substitute; but even this eludes our grasp, and we end by desiring repose, which death alone can give."

I told Byron that the greater part of our chagrins arose from disappointed hopes; that, in our pride and weakness, we consider happiness as our birthright, and received infliction as an injustice; whereas the latter was the inevitable lot of man, and the other but the *ignis fatuus* that beguiles the dreary path of life, and sparkles but to deceive. I added that while peace of mind was left us, we could not be called miserable. This greatest of all earthly consolations depends on ourselves; whereas for happiness we rely on others; but, as the first is lasting, and the second fleeting, we ought to cultivate that of which naught but our own actions can deprive us, and enjoy the other as we do a fine autumnal day, that we prize the more because we know it will soon be followed by winter.

"Your philosophy is really admirable (said Byron) if it were possible to follow it; but I suspect that you are among the number of those who preach it the most, and practise it the least, for you have too much feeling to have more than a theoretical knowledge of it. For example, how would you bear the ingratitude and estrangement of friends—of those in whom you had garnered up your heart? I suspect that, in such a case, feeling would beat philosophy out of the field; for I have ever found that philosophy, like experience never comes till one has ceased to require its services. I have," (continued Byron) "experienced ingratitude and estrangement from friends; and this, more than all else, has destroyed my confidence in human nature. It is thus from individual cases that we are so apt to generalise. A few persons on whom we have lavished our friendship, without ever examining if they had the qualities requisite to justify such a preference, are found to be ungrateful, and unworthy, and instead of blaming our own want of perception in the persons

so unwisely chosen, we cry out against poor human nature: one or two examples of ingratitude and selfishness prejudice us against the the world; but six times the number of examples of goodness and sincerity fail to reconcile us to it—so much more susceptible are we of evil impressions than of good. Have you not observed (said Byron) how much more prone people are to remember injuries than benefits? The most essential services are soon forgotten; but some trifling and often unintentional offence is rarely pardoned, and never effaced from the memory. All this proves that we have a strong and decided predisposition to evil; the tendencies and consequences of which we may conceal, but cannot eradicate. I think ill of the world, (continued Byron,) but I do not as some cynics assert, believe it to be composed of knaves and fools. No, I consider that it is, for the most part, peopled by those who have not talents sufficient to be the first, and yet have one degree too much to be the second."

Byron's bad opinion of mankind is not, I am convinced, genuine; and it certainly does not operate on his actions, as his first impulses are always good, and his heart is kind and charitable. His good deeds are never the result of reflection, as the heart acts before the head has had time to reason. This cynical habit of decrying human nature is one of the many little affectations to which he often descends; and this impression has become so fixed in my mind, that I have been vexed with myself for attempting to refute opinions of his, which, on reflection, I was convinced were not his real sentiments, but uttered either from a foolish wish of display, or from a spirit of contradiction, which much influences his conversation. I have heard him assert opinions one day, and maintain the most opposite, with equal warmth the day after: this arises not so much from insincerity, as from being wholly governed by the feeling of the moment: he has no fixed principle of conduct or of thought, and the want of it leads him into errors and inconsistencies, from which he is only rescued by a natural goodness of heart, that redeems, in some degree, what it cannot prevent. Violence of temper tempts him into expressions that might induce people to believe him vindictive and rancorous; he exaggerates all his feelings when he gives utterance to them; and here the imagination, that has led to his triumph in poetry, operates less happily, by giving a stronger shade to his sentiments and expressions. When he writes or speaks at such moments, the force of his language imposes a belief that the feeling which gives birth to it must be fixed in his mind; but see him in a few hours after, and not only no trace of this angry excitement remains, but, if recurred to by another, he smiles at his own exaggerated warmth of expression, and proves, in a thousand ways, that the temper only is responsible for his defects, and not the heart.

"I think it is Diderot (said Byron) who says that, to describe woman one ought to dip one's pen in the rainbow; and, instead of sand, use the dust from the wings of butterflies to dry the paper. This is a *concetto* worthy of a Frenchman; and, though meant as complimentary, is really by no means so to your sex. To describe woman, the pen should be dipped, not in the rainbow, but in the heart of man, ere more than eighteen summers have passed over his head; and, to dry the paper, I would allow only the sighs of adolescence. Women are best understood by men whose feelings have not been hardened by a contact with the world, and who believe in virtue because they are unacquainted with vice. A knowledge of vice will, as far as I can judge by experience, invariably produce disgust, as I believe, with my favorite poet, that—

> Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
> That, to be hated, needs but to be seen.

But he who has known it can never truly describe woman as she ought to be described; and, therefore, a public knowledge of the world unfits a man for the task. When I attempted to describe Haidee and Zuleika, I endeavored to forget all that friction with the world had taught me; and if I at all succeeded, it was because I was, and am, penetrated with the conviction that women only know evil frow having experienced it through men; whereas men have no criterion to judge of purity or goodness but woman. Some portion of this purity and goodness always adheres to woman, (continued Byron,) even though she may lapse from virtue; she makes a willing sacrifice of herself on the altar of affection, and thinks only of him for whom it is made: while men think of themselves alone, and regard the woman but as an object that administers to their selfish gratification, and who, when she ceases to have this power, is thought of no more, save as an obstruction in their path. You look incredulous, (said Byron;) but I have said what I think,

though not all that I think, as I have a much higher opinion of your sex than I have even now expressed."

This would be most gratifying could I be sure that, to-morrow or next day, some sweeping sarcasm against my sex may not escape from the lips that have now praised them, and that my credulity, in believing the praise, may not be quoted as an additional proof of their weakness. This instability of opinion, or expression of opinion, of Byron, destroys all confidence in him, and precludes the possibility of those, who live much in his society, feeling that sentiment of confiding security in him, without which a real regard cannot subsist. It has always appeared a strange anomaly to me, that Byron, who possesses such acuteness in discerning the foibles and defects of others, should have so little power either in conquering or concealing his own, that they are evident even to a superficial observer; it is also extraordinary that the knowledge of human nature, which enables him to discover at a glance such defects, should not dictate the wisdom of concealing his discoveries, at least from those in whom he has made them; but in this he betrays a total want of tact, and must often send away his associates dissatisfied with themselves, and still more so with him, if they happen to possess discrimination or susceptibility.

"To let a person see that you have discovered his faults, is to make him an enemy for life," (says Byron;) and yet this he does continually: he says, "that the only truths a friend will tell you, are your faults; and the only thing he will give you, is advice." Byron's affected display of knowledge of the world deprives him of commiseration for being its dupe, while his practical inexperience renders him so perpetually. He is at war with the actual state of things, yet admits that all that he now complains of has existed for centuries; and that those who have taken up arms against the world have found few applauders, and still fewer followers. His philosophy is more theoretical than practical, and must so continue, as long as passion and feeling have more influence over him than reflection and reason. Byron affects to be unfeeling, while he is a victim to sensibility; and to be reasonable, while he is governed by imagination only; and so meets with no sympathy from either the advocates of sensibility or reason, and consequently condemns both. "It is fortunate for those (said Byron) whose near connections are good and estimable; independently of various other advantages that are derived from it, perhaps the greatest of all are the impressions made on our minds in early youth by witnessing goodness, impressions which have such weight in deciding our future opinions. If we witness evil qualities in common acquaintances, the effect is slight, in comparison with that made by discovering them in those united to us by the ties of consanguinity; this last disgusts us with human nature, and renders us doubtful of goodness, a progressive step made in misanthrophy, the most fearful disease that can attack the mind. My first and earliest impressions were melancholy—my poor mother gave them; but to my sister, who, incapable of wrong herself, suspected no wrong in others, I owe the little good of which I can boast; and had I earlier known her, it might have influenced my destiny. Augusta has great strength of mind, which is displayed not only in her own conduct, but to support the weak and infirm of purpose. To me she was, in the hour of need, as a tower of strength. Her affection was my last rallying point, and is now the only bright spot that the horizon of England offers to my view. Augusta knew all my weaknesses, but she had love enough to bear with them. I value not the false sentiment of affection that adheres to one while we believe him faultless; not to love him would then be difficult: but give me the love that, with perception to view the errors, has sufficient force to pardon them—who can 'love the offender, yet detest the offence;' and this my sister had. She has given me such good advice, and yet, finding me incapable of following it, loved and pitied me but the more, because I was erring. This is true affection, and, above all, true Christian feeling; but how rarely is it to be met with in England! where *amour propre* prompts people to show their superiority by giving advice; and a *mélange* of selfishness and wounded vanity engages them to resent its not being followed; which they do by not only leaving off the *advised*, but by injuring him by every means in their power. Depend on it, (continued Byron,) the English are the most perfidious friends and unkind relations that the civilised world can produce; and if you have had the misfortune to lay them under weighty obligations, you may look for all the injuries that they can inflict, as they are anxious to avenge themselves for all the humiliations they suffer when they accept favors. They are proud,

but have not sufficient pride to refuse services that are necessary to their comfort, and have too much false pride to be grateful. They may pardon a refusal to assist them, but they never can forgive a generosity which, as they are seldom capable of practising or appreciating, overpowers and humiliates them. With this opinion of the English, (continued Byron,) which has not been lightly formed, you may imagine how truly I must value my sister, who is so totally opposed to them. She is tenacious of accepting obligations, even from the nearest relations; but, having accepted, is incapable of aught approaching to ingratitude. Poor Lady —— had just such a sister as mine, who, faultless herself, could pardon and weep over the errors of one less pure, and almost redeem them by her own excellence. Had Lady ——'s sister or mine, (continued Byron) been less good and irreproachable, they could not have afforded to be so forbearing; but, being unsullied, they could show mercy without fear of drawing attention to their own misdemeanors."

Byron talked to-day of Campbell the poet; said that he was a warm-hearted and honest man; praised his works, and quoted some passages from the "Pleasures of Hope," which he said was a poem full of beauties. "I differ, however, (said Byron,) with my friend Campbell on some points. Do you remember the passage—

But mark the wretch whose wanderings never knew
The world's regard, that soothes, though half untrue!
His erring heart the lash of sorrow bore,
But found not pity when it erred no more.

This, he said, was so far a true picture, those who once erred being supposed to err always—a charitable, but false, supposition, that the English are prone to act upon. "But, (added Byron) I am not prepared to admit, that a man, under such circumstances as those so poetically described by Campbell, could feel hope; and, judging by my own feelings, I should think that there would be more of envy than of hope in the poor man's mind, when he leaned on the gate, and looked at 'the blossom'd bean-field, and the sloping green.' Campbell was, however, right in representing it otherwise (continued Byron). We have all, God knows, occasion for hope to enable us to support the thousand vexations of this dreary existence; and he who leads us to believe in this universal panacea, in which, *par parenthese*, I have little faith, renders a service to humanity. Campbell's 'Lochiel' and 'Mariners' are admirable spirit-stirring productions (said Byron); his 'Gertrude of Wyoming' is beautiful; and some of the episodes in his 'Pleasures of Hope' pleased me so much, that I know them by heart. By the by (continued he) we must be indebted to Ireland for this mode of expressing the knowing any thing by rote, and it is at once so true and poetical, that I always use it. We certainly remember best those passages, as well as events, that interest us most, or touch the heart, which must have given birth to the phrase —'know by heart.' The 'Pleasures of Memory' is a very beautiful poem (said Byron), harmonious, finished, and chaste; it contains not a single meretricious ornament. If Rogers has not fixed himself in the higher fields of Parnassus, he has, at least, cultivated a very pretty flower-garden at its base. Is not this (continued Byron) a poetical image worthy of a *conversazione* at Lydia White's? But, jesting apart, for one ought to be serious in talking of so serious a subject as the pleasures of memory, which, God knows, never offered any pleasures to me, (mind, I mean memory, and not the poem,) it really always did remind me of a flower-garden, so filled with sweets, so trim, so orderly. You, I am sure, know the powerful poem written in a blank leaf of the 'Pleasures of Memory,' by an unknown author? He has taken my view of the subject, and I envy him for expressing all that I felt; but did not, could not, express as he has done. This wilderness of triste thoughts offered a curious contrast to the *hortus siccus* of pretty flowers that followed it, (said Byron) and marks the difference between inspiration and versification.

"Having compared Rogers's poem to a flower garden," continued Byron, "to what shall I compare Moore's?—to the Valley of Diamonds, where all is brilliant and attractive, but where one is so dazzled by the sparkling on every side that one knows not where to fix, each gem beautiful in itself but overpowering to the eye from their quantity. Or, to descend to a more homely comparison, though really," continued Byron, "so brilliant a subject hardly admits of any thing homely, Moore's poems (with the exception of the Melodies) resemble the fields in Italy, covered by such myriads of fire-flies shining and glittering around, that if one attempts to sieze one, another still more brilliant attracts, and one is bewildered from too much brightness. I remember

reading somewhere," said Byron, "a *concetto* of designating different living poets, by the cups Apollo gives them to drink out of. Wordsworth is made to drink from a wooden bowl, and my melancholy self from a skull, chased with gold. Now, I would add the following cups:—To Moore, I would give a cup formed like the lotus flower, and set in brilliants; to Crabbe a scooped pumpkin; to Rogers, an antique vase, formed of agate; and to Colman, a champagne-glass, as descriptive of their different styles. I dare say none of them would be satisfied with the appropriation; but who ever is satisfied with any thing in the shape of criticism? and least of all poets."

Talking of Shakspeare, Byron said, that he owed one half of his popularity to his low origin, which, like charity, covereth a multitude of sins with the multitude, and the other half, to the remoteness of the time at which he wrote from our own days. All his vulgarisms," continued Byron, "are attributed to the circumstances of his birth and breeding depriving him of a good education; hence they are to be excused, and the obscurities with which his works abound are all easily explained away by the simple statement, that he wrote above two hundred years ago, and that the terms then in familiar use are now become obsolete. With two such good excuses, as want of education, and having written above two hundred years before our time, any writer may pass muster; and when to these is added the being a sturdy hind of low degree, which to three parts of the community in England has a peculiar attraction, one ceases to wonder at his supposed popularity; I say supposed, for who goes to see his plays, and who, except country parsons, or mouthing, stage-struck, theatrical amateurs, read them?" I told Byron what really was, and is, my impression, that he was not sincere in his depreciation of our immortal bard; and I added that I preferred believing him insincere, than incapable of judging works, which his own writings proved he must, more than most other men, feel the beauties of. He laughed, and replied, "That the compliment I paid to his writings was so entirely at the expense of his sincerity, that he had no cause to be flattered; but that, knowing I was one of those that worshipped Shakspeare, he forgave me, and would only bargain that I made equal allowance for his worship of Pope." I observed, "That any comparison between the two was as absurd as comparing some magnificent feudal castle, surrounded by mountains and forests, with foaming cataracts, and boundless lakes, to the pretty villa of Pope, with its sheen lawn, artificial grotto, stunted trees, and trim exotics." He said that my simile was more ingenious than just, and hoped that I was prepared to admit that Pope was the greatest of all modern poets, and a philosopher as well as a poet. I made my peace by expressing my sincere admiration of Pope, but begged to be understood as refusing to admit any comparison between him and Shakspeare; and so the subject ended. Byron is so prone to talk for effect, and to assert what he does not believe, that one must be cautious in giving implicit credence to his opinions. My conviction is, that, in spite of his declarations to the contrary, he admires Shakspeare as much as most of his countrymen do; but that, unlike the generality of them, he sees the blemishes that the freedom of the times in which the great poet lived led him to indulge in his writings, in a stronger point of view; and takes pleasure in commenting on them with severity, as a means of wounding the vanity of the English. I have rarely met with a person more conversant with the works of Shakspeare than was Byron. I have heard him quote passages from them repeatedly; and in a tone that marked how well he appreciated their beauty which certainly lost nothing in his delivery of them, as few possessed a more harmonious voice or a more elegant pronunciation than did Byron. Could there be a less equivocal proof of his admiration of our immortal bard than the tenacity with which his memory retained the finest passages of all his works? When I made this observation to him he smiled, and affected to boast that his memory was so retentive that it equally retained all that he read; but as I had seen many proofs of the contrary, I persevered in affirming what I have never ceased to believe, that, in despite of his professions to the reverse, Byron was in his heart a warm admirer of Shakspeare.

Byron takes a peculiar pleasure in opposing himself to popular opinion on all points; he wishes to be thought as dissenting from the multitude, and this affectation is the secret source of many of the incongruities he expresses. One cannot help lamenting that so great a genius should be sullied by this weakness; but he has so many redeeming points that we must pardon what we cannot overlook, and

attribute this error to the imperfectibility of human nature. Once thoroughly acquainted with his peculiarities, much that appeared incomprehensible is explained, and one knows when to limit belief to assertions that are not always worthy of commending it, because uttered from the caprice of the moment. He declares that such is his bad opinion of the taste and feelings of the English, that he should form a bad opinion of any work that they admired, or any person that they praised; and that their admiration of his own works has rather confirmed than softened his bad opinion of them. "It was the exaggerated praises of the people in England," said he, "that indisposed me to the Duke of Wellington. I know that the same herd, who were trying to make an idol of him, would, on any reverse, or change of opinions, hurl him from the pedestal to which they had raised him, and lay their idol in the dust. I remember," continued Byron, "enraging some of his Grace's worshippers, after the battle of Waterloo, by quoting the lines from Ariosto;—

> Fù il vincer sempre mai laudadil cosa,
> Vincasi ò per fortuna ò per ingregno,

in answer to their appeal to me, if he was not the greatest general that ever existed."

I told Byron that his quotation was insidious, but that the Duke had gained too many victories to admit the possibility of any of them being achieved more by chance than ability; and that, like his attacks on Shakspeare, he was not sincere in disparaging Wellington, as I was sure he must *au fond* be as proud of him as all other Englishmen are. "What!" said Byron, "could a Whig be proud of Wellington! would this be consistent?"

The whole of Byron's manner, and his countenance on this and other occasions, when the name of the Duke of Wellington has been mentioned, conveyed the impression, that he had not been *de bonne foi* in his censures on him. Byron's words and feelings are so often opposed, and both so completely depend on the humor of the moment, that those who know him well could never attach much confidence to the stability of his sentiments, or the force of his expressions; nor could they feel surprised, or angry, at hearing that he had spoken unkindly of some for whom he really felt friendship. This habit of censuring is his ruling passion, and he is now too old to correct it.

"I have been amused," said Byron, "in reading 'Les Essais de Montaigne,' to find how severe he is on the sentiment of tristesse: we are always severe on that particular passion to which we are not addicted, and the French are exempt from this. Montaigne says that the Italians were right in translating their word tristezza, which means tristesse, into malignité; and this," continued Byron, "explains my méchanceté, for that I am subject to tristesse cannot be doubted; and if that means, as Le Sieur de Montaigne states, *la malignité*, this is the secret of all my evil doings, or evil imaginings, and probably is also the source of my inspiration." This idea appeared to amuse him very much, and he dwelt on it with apparent satisfaction, saying that it absolved him from a load of responsibility, as he considered himself, according to this, as no more accountable for the satires he might write or speak, than for his personal deformity. Nature, he said, had to answer for malignité as well as for deformity; she gave both, and the unfortunate persons on whom she bestowed them were not to be blamed for their effects. Byron said, that Montaigne was one of the French writers that amused him the most, as, independently of the quaintness with which he made his observations, a perusal of his works was like a repetition at school, they rubbed up the reader's classical knowledge. He added, that "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy" was also excellent, from the quantity of desultory information it contained, and was a mine of knowledge that, though much worked, was inexhaustible. I told him that he seemed to think more highly of Montaigne than did some of his own countrymen; for that when Le Cardinal du Perron "appeloit les Essais de Montaigne le bréviaire des honnêtes gens; le célèbre Huet, êvêque d'Avranhce, les disoit celui des honnêtes paresseux et des ignorans, qui veulent s'enfariner de quelque teinture des lettres"—Byron said that the critique was severe, but just; for that Montaigne was the greatest plagiarist that ever existed, and certainly had turned his reading to the most account. "But," said Byron, "who is the author that is not, intentionally or unintentionally, a plagiarist? Many more, I am persuaded, are the latter than the former; for if one has read much, it is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid adopting, not only the thoughts, but the expressions of others, which, after they have been some time stored in our minds, appear to us to come forth ready formed, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter, and we fancy them our own progeny, instead of

being those of adoption: I met lately a passage in a French book," continued Byron, "that states, *apropos* of plagiaries, that it was from the preface to the works of Montaigne, by Mademoiselle de Gournay, his adopted daughter, that Pascal stole his image of the Divinity:—'C'est un cercle, dont la circonférence est partout, et le centre nulle part.' So you see that even the saintly Pascal could steal as well as another, and was probably unconscious of the theft.

"To be perfectly original," continued Byron, "one should think much and read little; and this is impossible, as one must have read much before one learns to think; for I have no faith in innate ideas, whatever I may have of innate predispositions. But after one has laid in a tolerable stock of materials for thinking, I should think the best plan would be to give the mind time to digest it, and then turn it all well over by thought and reflection, by which we make the knowledge acquired our own; and on this foundation we may let our originality (if we have any) build a superstructure, and if not, it supplies our want of it, to a certain degree. I am accused of plagiarism," continued Byron, "as I see by the newspapers. If I am guilty, I have many partners in the crime; for I assure you I scarcely know a living author who might not have a similar charge brought against him, and whose thoughts I have not occasionally found in the works of others; so that this consoles me.

"The book you lent me, Dr. Richardson's 'Travels along the Meditterranean,'" said Byron, "is an excellent work. It abounds in information, sensibly and unaffectedly conveyed, and even without Lord B's praises of the author, would have led me to conclude that he was an enlightened, sensible, and thoroughly good man. He is always in earnest," continued Byron, "and never writes for effect: his language is well chosen and correct; and his religious views unaffected and sincere without bigotry. He is just the sort of man I should like to have with me for Greece—clever, both as a man and a physician; for I require both—one for my mind, and the other for my body, which is a little the worse for wear, from the bad usage of the troublesome tenant that has inhabited it, God help me!

"It is strange," said Byron, "how seldom one meets with clever, sensible men in the professions of divinity or physic! and yet they are precisely the professions that most peculiarly demand intelligence and ability—and to keep the soul and body in good health requires no ordinary talents. I have, I confess, as little faith in medicine as Napoleon had. I think it has many remedies, but few specifics. I do not know if we arrived at the same conclusion by the same road. Mine has been drawn from observing that the medical men who fell in my way were, in general, so deficient in ability, that even had the science of medicine been fifty times more simplified than it ever will be in our time, they had not intelligence enough to comprehend or reduce it to practice, which has given me a much greater dread of remedies than diseases. Medical men do not sufficiently attend to idiosyncracy," continued Byron, "on which so much depends, and often hurry to the grave one patient by a treatment that has succeeded with another. The moment they ascertain a disease to be the same as one they have known, they conclude the same remedies that cured the first must remove the second, not making allowance for the peculiarities of temperament, habits, and disposition; which last has a great influence in maladies. All that I have seen of physicians has given me a dread of them, which dread will continue until I have met a doctor like your friend Richardson, who proves himself to be a sensible and intelligent man. I maintain," continued Byron, "that more than half our maladies are produced by accustoming ourselves to more sustenance than is required for the support of nature. We put too much oil into the lamp, and it blazes and burns out; but if we only put enough to feed the flame, it burns brightly and steadily. We have, God knows, sufficient alloy in our compositions, without reducing them still nearer to the brute by overfeeding. I think that one of the reasons why women are in general so much better than men—for I do think they are, whatever I may say to the contrary," continued Byron, "is, that they do not indulge in *gourmandise* as men do; and, consequently, do not labor under the complicated horrors that indigestion produces, which had such a dreadful effect on the tempers, as I have both witnessed and felt.

"There is nothing I so much dread as flattery," said Byron; "not that I mean to say I dislike it—for, on the contrary, if well administered, it is very agreeable—but I dread it because I know, from experience, we end by disliking those we flatter: it is the mode we take to avenge

ourselves for stooping to the humiliation of flattering them. On this account, I never flatter those I really like; and, also, I should be fearful and jealous of owing their regard for me to the pleasure my flattery gave them. I am not so forbearing with those I am indifferent about; for seeing how much people like flattery, I cannot resist giving them some, and it amuses me to see how they swallow even the largest doses. Now, there is ——— and ———; who could live on passable terms with them, that did not administer to their vanity? One tells you all his *bonnes fortunes*, and would never forgive you if you appeared to be surprised at their extent; and the other talks to you of prime ministers and dukes by their surnames, and cannot state the most simple fact or occurrence without telling you that Wellington or Devonshire told him so. One does not," continued Byron, "meet this last *foiblesse* out of England, and not then, I must admit, except among *parvenus*.

"It is doubtful which, vanity or conceit, is the most offensive," said Byron; "but I think conceit is, because the gratification of vanity depends on the suffrages of others, to gain which vain people must endeavor to please; but as conceit is content with its own approbation, it makes no sacrifice, and is not susceptible of humiliation. I confess that I have a spiteful pleasure," continued Byron, "in mortifying conceited people; and the gratification is enhanced by the difficulty of the task. One of the reasons why I dislike society is that its contact excites all the evil qualities of my nature, which, like the fire in the flint, can only be elicited by friction. My philosophy is more theoretical than practical: it is never at hand when I want it; and the puerile passions that I witness in those whom I encounter excite disgust when examined near, though, viewed at a distance, they only create pity:—that is to say, in simple homely truth," continued Byron, "the follies of mankind, when they touch *me* not, I can be lenient to, and moralise on; but if they rub against my own, there is an end to the philosopher. We are all better in solitude, and more especially if we are tainted with evil passions, which, God help us! we all are, more or less," said Byron. "They are not then brought into action: reason and reflection have time and opportunity to resume that influence over us which they rarely can do if we are actors in the busy scene of life; and we grow better, because we believe ourselves better. Our passions often only sleep when we suppose them dead; and we are not convinced of our mistake till they are awake with renewed strength, gained by repose. We are, therefore, wise when we choose solitude, where 'passions sleep and reason wakes;" for if we cannot conquer the evil qualities that adhere to our nature, we do well to encourage their slumber. Like cases of acute pain, when the physician cannot remove the malady he administers soporifics.

"When I recommend solitude," said Byron, "I do not mean the solitude of country neighborhood, where people pass their time *á dire, redire, et médire*. No! I mean a regular retirement, with a woman that one loves, and interrupted only by a correspondence with a man that one esteems, though if we put plural of man, it would be more agreeable for the correspondence. By this means, friendships would not be subject to the variations and estrangements that are so often caused by a frequent personal intercourse; and we might delude ourselves into a belief that they were sincere, and might be lasting—two difficult articles of faith in my creed of friendship. Socrates and Plato," continued Byron, "ridiculed Laches, who defined fortitude to consist in remaining firm in the ranks opposed to the enemy; and I agree with those philosophers in thinking that a retreat is not inglorious, whether from the enemy in the field or in the town, if one feels one's own weakness, and anticipates a defeat. I feel that society is my enemy, in even more than a figurative sense: I have not fled, but retreated from it; and if solitude has not made me better, I am sure it has prevented my becoming worse, which is a point gained.

"Have you ever observed," said Byron, "the extreme dread that *parvenus* have of aught that approaches to vulgarity? In manners, letters, conversation, nay, even in literature, they are always superfine; and a man of birth would unconsciously hazard a thousand dubious phrases sooner than a *parvenu* would risk the possibility of being suspected of one. One of the many advantages of birth is, that it saves one from this hypercritical gentility, and he of noble blood may be natural without the fear of being accused of vulgarity. I have left an assembly filled with all the names of *haut ton* in London, and where little but names were to be found, to seek relief from the ennui that overpowered me, in a—cider cellar:—are you not shocked? —and have found there more food for speculation than in the vapid circles of

glittering dulness I had left. —— or —— dared not have done this; but I had the patent of nobility to carry me through it, and what would have been deemed originality and spirit in me, would have been considered a natural bias to vulgar habits in them. In my works, too, I have dared to pass the frozen molehills—I cannot call them Alps, though they are frozen eminences—of high life, and have used common thoughts and common words to express my impressions; where poor —— would have clarified each thought, and double-refined each sentence, until he had reduced them to the polished and cold temperature of the illuminated houses of ice that he loves to frequent; which have always reminded me of the palace of ice built to please an empress, cold, glittering, and costly. But I suppose that —— and —— like them, from the same cause that I like high life below stairs, not being born to it:—there is a good deal in this. I have been abused for dining at Tom Cribb's, where I certainly was amused, and have returned from a dinner where the guests were composed of the magnates of the land, where I had nigh gone to sleep; at least my intellect slumbered—so dullified was I and those around me, by the soporific quality of the conversation, if conversation it might be called. For a long time I thought it was my constitutional melancholy that made me think London society so insufferably tiresome; but I discovered that those who had no such malady found it equally so; the only difference was that they yawned under the nightly inflictions, yet still continued to bear them, while I writhed, and 'muttered curses not loud but deep' against the well-dressed automatons, that threw a spell over my faculties, making me doubt if I could any longer feel or think: and I have sought the solitude of my chamber, almost doubting my own identity, or, at least, my sanity; such was the overpowering effect produced on me by exclusive society in London. Madame de Staël was the only person of talent I ever knew who was not overcome by it; but this was owing to the constant state of excitement she was kept in by her extraordinary self-complacency, and the mystifications of the dandies, who made her believe all sorts of things. I have seen her entranced by them, listening with undisguised delight to exaggerated compliments, uttered only to hoax her, by persons incapable of appreciating her genius, and who doubted its existence from the facility with which she received mystifications which would have been detected in a moment by the most commonplace woman in the room. It is thus genius and talent are judged of," continued Byron, "by those who, having neither, are incapable of understanding them; and a punster may glory in puzzling a genius of the first order, by a play on words that was below his comprehension, though *suited* to that of the most ordinary understandings. Madame de Staël had no tact; she would believe any thing, merely because she did not take the trouble to examine, being too much occupied with self, and often said the most *mal à propos* things, because she was thinking not of the person she addressed, but of herself. She had a party to dine with her one day in London, when Sir James and Lady —— entered the drawing-room, the lady dressed in a green gown, with a shawl of the same verdant hue, and a bright red turban. Madame de Staël marched up to her in her eager manner, and exclaimed, 'Ah, mon Dieu, miladi! comme vous ressemblez à un perroquet!' The poor lady looked confounded: the company tried, but in vain, to suppress the smiles the observation excited: but all felt that the making it betrayed a total want of tact in the Corinne.'

"Does the cant of sentiment still continue in England?" asked Byron. "'Childe Harold' called it forth; but my 'Juan' was well calculated to cast it into shade, and had that merit, if it had no other; but I must not refer to the Don, as that, I remember, is a prohibited subject between us. Nothing sickens me so completely," said Byron, "as women who affect sentiment in conversation. A woman without sentiment is not a woman; but I have observed, that those who most display it in words have least of the reality. Sentiment, like love and grief, should be reserved for privacy; and when I hear women *affichant* their sentimentality, I look upon it as an allegorical mode of declaring their wish of finding an object on whom they could bestow its superfluity. I am of a jealous nature," said Byron, "and should wish to call slumbering sentiment into life in the woman I love, instead of finding that I was chosen, from its excess and activity rendering a partner in the firm indispensable. I should hate a woman," continued Byron, "who could laugh at or ridicule sentiment, as I should, and do, women who have not religious feelings: and much as I dislike bigotry, I think it a thousand

times more pardonable in a woman than irreligion. There is something unfeminine in the want of religion, that takes off the peculiar charm of woman. It inculcates mildness, forbearance and charity—those graces that adorn them more than all others," continued Byron, "and whose beneficent effects are felt, not only on their minds and manners, but are visible in their countenances, to which they give their own sweet character. But when I say that I admire religion in women," said Byron, "don't fancy that I like sectarian ladies, distributors of tracts, armed and ready for controversies, many of whom only preach religion, but do not practise it. No; I like to know that it is the guide of woman's actions, the softener of her words, the soother of her cares, and those of all dear to her, who are comforted by her—that it is, in short, the animating principle to which all else is referred. When I see women professing religion and violating its duties—mothers turning from erring daughters, instead of staying to reclaim—sisters deserting sisters, whom, in their hearts, they know to be more pure than themselves—and wives abandoning husbands on the ground of faults that they should have wept over, and redeemed by the force of love—then it is," continued Byron, "that I exclaim against the cant of false religion, and laugh at the credulity of those who can reconcile such conduct with the dictates of a creed that ordains forgiveness, and commands that 'if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted;' and that tells a wife, that 'if she hath a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,' &c. Now, people professing religion either believe, or do not believe, such creeds," continued Byron. "If they believe, and act contrary to their belief, what avails their religion, except to throw discredit on its followers, by showing that they practise not its tenets? and if they inwardly disbelieve, as their conduct would lead one to think, are they not guilty of hypocrisy? It is such incongruities between the professions and conduct of those who affect to be religious, that puts me out of patience," continued Byron, "and makes me wage war with cant, and not, as many suppose, a disbelief or want of faith in religion. I want to see it *practised*, and to know, which is soon made known by the conduct, that it dwells in the heart instead of being on the lips only of its votaries. Let me not be told that the mothers, sisters and wives, who violate the duties such relationships impose, are good and religious people; let it be admitted that a mother, sister, or wife, who deserts instead of trying to lead back the stray sheep to the flock, cannot be truly religious, and I shall exclaim no more against hypocrisy and cant, because they will no longer be dangerous. Poor Mrs. Sheppard tried more, and did more to reclaim me," continued Byron, "than ——; but no; as I have been preaching religion, I shall practise one of its tenets, and be charitable; so I shall not finish the sentence."

It appears to me that Byron has reflected much on religion, and that many, if not all, the doubts and sarcasms he has expressed on it are to be attributed only to his enmity against its false worshippers. He is indignant at seeing people professing it governed wholly by worldly principles in their conduct; and fancies that he is serving the true cause by exposing the votaries that he thinks dishonor it. He forgets that in so exposing and decrying them, he is breaking through the commandments of charity he admires, and says ought to govern our actions towards our erring brethren; but that he reflects deeply on the subject of religion and its duties, is, I hope, a step gained in the right path, in which I trust he will continue to advance; and which step I attribute, as does he, to the effect the prayer of Mrs. Sheppard had on his mind, and which, it is evident, has made a lasting impression, by the frequency and seriousness with which he refers to it.

"There are two blessings of which people never know the value until they have lost them," said Byron, "health and reputation. And not only is their loss destructive to our own happiness, but injurious to the peace and comfort of our friends. Health seldom goes without temper accompanying it; and that fled, we become a burden on the patience of those around us, until dislike replaces pity and forbearance. Loss of reputation entails still greater evils. In losing caste, deservedly or otherwise," continued Byron, "we become reckless and misanthropic: we cannot sympathise with those, from whom we are separated by the barrier of public opinion, and pride becomes 'the scorpion, girt by fire,' that turns on our own breast the sting prepared for our enemies. Shakspeare says, that, 'it is a bit-

ter thing to look into happiness through another man's eyes;' and this must he do," said Byron, "who has lost his reputation. Nay, rendered nervously sensitive by the falseness of his position, he sees, or fancies he sees, scorn or avoidance in the eyes of all he encounters; and, as it is well known that we are never so jealous of the respect of others as when we have forfeited our own, every mark of coldness or disrespect he meets with, arouses a host of angry feelings, that prey upon his peace. Such a man is to be feared," continued Byron; "and yet how many such have the world made! how many errors have not slander and calumny magnified into crimes of the darkest die! and malevolence and injustice having set the condemned seal on the reputation of him who has been judged without a trial, he is driven without the pale of society, a sense of injustice rankling in his heart; and if his hand be not against each man, the hand, or least the tongue of each man is against him. The genius and powers of such a man," continued Byron, "act but as fresh incitements to the unsated malice of his calumniators; and the fame they win is but as the flame that consumes the funeral pile, whose blaze attracts attention to the substance that feeds it. Mediocrity is to be desired for those who lose caste, because if it gains not pardon for errors, it sinks them into oblivion. But genius," continued Byron, "reminds the enemies of its possessor, of his existence, and of their injustice. They are enraged that he on whom they heaped obloquy, can surmount it, and elevate himself on new ground, where their malice cannot obstruct his path"

It was impossible not to see that his own position had led Byron to these reflections; and on observing the changes in his expressive countenance while uttering them, who could resist pitying the morbid feelings which had given them birth! The milk and honey that flowed in his breast has been turned into gall by the bitterness with which his errors have been assailed; but even now, so much of human kindness remains in his nature, that I am persuaded the effusions of wounded pride which embody themselves in the biting satires that escape from him, are more productive of pain to him who writes, than to those on whom they are written. Knowing Byron as I do, I could forgive the most cutting satire his pen ever traced, because I know the bitter feelings and violent reaction which led to it; and that, in thus avenging some real or imagined injury on individuals, he looks on them as a part of that great whole, of which that world which he has waged war with, and that he fancies has waged war with him, is composed. He looks on himself like a soldier in action, who, without any individual resentment, strikes at all within his reach, as components parts of the force to which he is opposed. If this be indefensible, and all must admit that it is so, let us be merciful even while we are condemning; and let us remember what must have been the heart-aches and corroding thoughts of a mind so sensitive as Byron's, ere the last weapons of despair were resorted to, and the fearful sally, the forlorn hope attack, on the world's opinions, made while many of those opinions had partisans within his own breast, even while he stood in the last breach of defeated hope, to oppose them. The poison in which he has dipped the arrows aimed at the world has long been preying on his own life, and has been produced by the deleterious draughts administered by that world, and which he has quaffed to the dregs, until it has turned the once healthful current of his existence into deadly venom, poisoning all the fine and generous qualities that adorned his nature. He feels what he might have been, and what he is, and detests the world that has marred his destiny. But, as the passions lose their empire, he will think differently: the veil which now obscures his reason will pass away, like clouds dispelled by the sun; he will learn to distinguish much of good, where he has hitherto seen only evil; and no longer braving the world, and, to enrage it, assuming faults he has not, he will let the good qualities he has make themselves known, and gain that good-will and regard they were formed to conciliate.

"I often, in imagination, pass over a long lapse of years, (said Byron,) and console myself for present privations, in anticipating the time when my daughter will know me by reading my works; for, though the hand of prejudice may conceal my portrait from her eyes, it cannot hereafter conceal my thoughts and feelings, which will talk to her when *he* to whom they belonged has ceased to exist. The triumph will then be mine; and the tears that my child will drop over expressions wrung from me by mental agony—the certainty that she will enter into the sentiments which dictated the various allusions to her and myself in my works—consoles me in many a gloomy hour. Ada's mo-

ther has feasted on the smiles of her infancy and growth, but the tears of her maturity shall be mine."

I thought it a good opportunity to represent to Byron, that this thought alone should operate to prevent his ever writing a page which could bring the blush of offended modesty to the cheek of his daughter; and that if he hoped to live in her heart, unsullied by aught that could abate her admiration, he ought never more to write a line of "Don Juan." He remained silent for some minutes, and then said, "You are right: I never recollected this. I am jealously tenacious of the undivided sympathy of my daughter; and that work, ('Don Juan,') written to beguile hours of *tristesse* and wretchedness, is well calculated to loosen my hold on her affection. I will write no more of it—would that I had never written a line!

There is something tender and beautiful in the deep love with which poor Byron turns to his poor daughter. This is his last resting-place, and on her heart has he cast his last anchor of hope. When one reflects that he looks not to consolation from her during his life, as he believes her mother implacable, and only hopes that, when the grave has closed over him, his child will cherish his memory, and weep over his misfortunes, it is impossible not to sympathise with his feelings. Poor Byron! why is he not always true to himself? Who can, like him, excite sympathy, even when one knows him to be erring? But he shames one out of one's natural and better feelings by his mockery of self. Alas!

His is a lofty spirit, turn'd aside
From its bright path by woes, and wrongs, and pride;
And onward in its new, tumultuous course,
Borne with too rapid and intense a force
To pause one moment in the dread career,
And ask—if such could be its native sphere?

How unsatisfactory is it to find one's feelings with regard to Byron's varying every day! This is because he is never two days the same. The day after he has awakened the deepest interest, his manner of scoffing at himself and others destroys it, and one feels as if one had been duped into a sympathy, only to be laughed at.

"I have been accused (said Byron) of thinking ill of women. This has proceeded from my sarcastic observations on them in conversation, much more than from what I have written. The fact is, I always say whatever comes into my head, and very often say things to provoke people to whom I am talking. If I meet a romantic person, with what I call a too exalted opinion of women, I have a peculiar satisfaction in speaking lightly of them; not out of pique to your sex, but to mortify their champion; as I always conclude, that when a man overpraises women, he does it to convey the impression of how much they must have favored him, to have won such gratitude towards them; whereas there is such an abnegation of vanity in a poor devil's decrying women—it is such a proof positive that they never distinguished him—that I can overlook it. People take for gospel all I say, and go away continually with false impressions. *Mais n'importe!* it will render the statements of my future biographers more amusing; as I flatter myself I shall have more than one. Indeed, the more the merrier, say I. One will represent me as a sort of sublime misanthrope, with moments of kind feeling. This, *par exemple*, is my favorite *rôle*. Another will portray me as a modern Don Juan; and a third (as it would be hard if a votary of the Muses had less than the number of the Graces for his biographers) will, it is to be hoped, if only for opposition sake, represent me as an *amiable*, ill-used gentleman, 'more sinned against than sinning.' Now, if I know myself, I should say, that I have no character at all. By the by, this is what has long been said, as I lost mine, as an Irishman would say, before I had it; that is to say, my reputation was gone according to the good-natured English, before I had arrived at years of discretion, which is the period one is supposed to have found one. But, joking apart, what I think of myself is, that I am so changeable, being every thing by turns and nothing long—I am such a strange *mélange* of good and evil, that it would be difficult to describe me. There are but two sentiments to which I am constant—a strong love of liberty, and a detestation of cant, and neither is calculated to gain me friends. I am of a wayward, uncertain disposition, more disposed to display the defects than the redeeming points in my nature; this, at least, proves that I understand mankind, for they are always ready to believe the evil, but not the good; and there is no crime of which I could accuse myself, for which they would not give me implicit credit. What do you think of me?" (asked he, looking seriously in my face.)

I replied, "I look on you as a spoilt child of genius, an epicycle in your own

circle." At which he laughed, though half disposed to be angry.

"I have made as many sacrifices to liberty (continued Byron) as most people of my age; and the one I am about to undertake is not the least, though, probably, it will be the last; for, with my broken health, and the chances of war, Greece will most likely terminate my mortal career. I like Italy, its climate, its customs, and, above all, its freedom from cant of every kind, which is the *primum mobile* of England: therefore it is no slight sacrifice of comfort to give up the tranquil life I lead here, and break through the ties I have formed, to engage in a cause, for the successful result of which I have no very sanguine hopes. You will think me more superstitious than ever (said Byron) when I tell you, that I have a presentiment that I shall die in Greece. I hope it may be in action, for that would be a good finish to a very *triste* existence, and I have a horror to death-bed scenes; but as I have not been famous for my luck in life, most probably I shall not have more in the manner of my death, and that I may draw my last sigh, not on the field of glory, but on the bed of disease. I very nearly died when I was in Greece in my youth; perhaps as things have turned out, it would have been well if I had: I should have lost nothing, and the world very little, and I would have escaped many cares, for God knows I have had enough of one kind or another: but I am getting gloomy, and looking either back or forward is not calculated to enliven me. One of the reasons why I quiz my friends in conversation is, that it keeps me from thinking of myself: you laugh, but it is true."

Byron had so unquenchable a thirst for celebrity, that no means were left untried that might attain it: this frequently led to his expressing opinions totally at variance with his actions and real sentiments, and *vice versâ*, and made him appear quite inconsistent and puerile. There was no sort of celebrity that he did not, at some period or other, condescend to seek, and he was not over nice in the means, provided he obtained the end. This weakness it was that led him to accord his society to many persons whom he thought unworthy the distinction, fancying that he might find a greater facility in astonishing them, which he had a childish propensity to do, than with those who were more on an equality with him. When I say persons that he thought unworthy of his society, I refer only to their [illegible] the [illegible] was [illegible] being [illegible] prejudice [illegible] jugated [illegible] submission [illegible] whom he [illegible] to his [illegible] duly impressed [illegible] descension, as well as [illegible] satility of his [illegible] he showed his [illegible] an air of superiority [illegible] opinions in a dictatorial [illegible] his fiat there was no appeal. If [illegible] contrary, they appeared willing [illegible] his superiority in all respects, [illegible] kind, playful and good-humoured, and [illegible] showed his own sense of [illegible] jokes, and attempts at [illegible] he was greatly addicted.

An extraordinary peculiarity in Byron was his constant habit of disclaiming friendships, a habit that must have been rather humiliating to those who prided themselves on being considered his friends. He invariably, in conversing about the persons supposed to stand in that relation to him, drew a line of demarcation; and Lord Clare, with Mr. Hobhouse and Moore, were the only persons he allowed to be within its pale. Long acquaintance, habitual correspondence, and reciprocity of kind actions, which are the general bonds of friendship, were not admitted by Byron to be sufficient claims to the title of friend; and he seized with avidity every opportunity of denying this relation with persons for whom, I am persuaded, he felt the sentiment, and to whom he would not have hesitated to have given all proof but the *name*, yet who, wanting this, could not consistently with delicacy receive aught else.

This habit of disclaiming friendships was very injudicious in Byron, as it must have wounded the *amour propre* of those who liked him, and humiliated the pride and delicacy of all whom he had ever laid under obligations, as well as freed from a sense of what was due to friendship, those who, restrained by the acknowledgment of that tie, might have proved themselves his zealous defenders and advocates. It was his aristocratic pride that prompted this ungracious conduct, and I remember telling him, *apropos* to his denying friendships, that all the persons with whom he disclaimed them, must have less vanity, and more kindness

genius, but for his defects, as a sort of right that appertained solely to him. He was conscious of his *foiblesse*, but wanted either the power or inclination to correct it, and was deeply offended if others appeared to have made the discovery.

There was a sort of mental reservation in Byron's intercourse with those with whom he was on habits of intimacy that he had not tact enough to conceal, and which was more offensive when the natural flippancy of his manner was taken into consideration. His incontinence of speech on subjects of a personal nature, and with regard to the defects of friends, rendered this display of reserve on other points still more offensive; as, after having disclosed secrets which left him, and some of those whom he professed to like, at the mercy of the discretion of the person confided in, he would absolve him from the best motive for secrecy—that of implied confidence—by disclaiming any sentiment of friendship for those so trusted. It was as though he said, I think aloud, and you hear my thoughts; but I have no feeling of friendship towards you, though you might imagine I have from the confidence I repose in you. Do not deceive yourself; few, if any, are worthy of my friendship: and only one or two possess even a portion of it. I think not of you but as the first recipient for the disclosures that I have *le besoin* to make, and as an admirer whom I can make administer to my vanity, by exciting in turn surprise, wonder and admiration; but I can have no sympathy with you.

Byron. in all his intercourse with acquaintances, proved that he wanted the simplicity and good faith of uncivilised life, without having acquired the tact and fine perception that throws a veil over the artificial coldness and selfishness of refined civilisation, which must be concealed to be rendered endurable. To keep alive sympathy, there must be a reciprocity of feelings; and this Byron did not, or would not, understand. It was the want of this, or rather the studied display of the want, that deprived him of the affection that would otherwise have been unreservedly accorded to him, and which he had so many qualities calculated to call forth. Those who have known Byron only in the turmoil and feverish excitation of a London life, may not have had time or opportunity to be struck with this defalcation in his nature; or, if they observed it, might naturally attribute it to the artificial state of society in London, which more or less affects all its members; but when he was seen in the isolation of a foreign land, with few acquaintances, and fewer friends, to make demands either on his time or his sympathy, this extreme egoism became strikingly visible, and repelled the affection that must otherwise have replaced the admiration to which he never failed to give birth.

Byron had thought long and profoundly on man and his vices—natural and acquired—he generalised and condemned *en masse*, in theory; while, in practice, he was ready to allow the exceptions to his general rule. He had commenced his travels ere yet age or experience had rendered him capable of forming a just estimate of the civilised world he had left, or the uncivilised one he was exploring: hence he saw both through a false medium, and observed not that their advantages and disadvantages were counterbalanced. Byron wished for that Utopian state of perfection which experience teaches us it is impossible to attain—the simplicity and good faith of savage life, with the refinement and intelligence of civilisation. Naturally of a melancholy temperament, his travels in Greece were eminently calculated to give a still more sombre tint to his mind, and tracing at each step the marks of degradation which had followed a state of civilisation still more luxurious than that he had left; and surrounded with the fragments of arts that we can but imperfectly copy, and ruins whose original beauty we can never hope to emulate, he grew into a contempt of the actual state of things, and lived but in dreams of the past, or aspirations of the future. This state of mind, as unnatural as it is uncommon in a young man, destroyed the bonds of sympathy between him and those of his own age, without creating any with those of a more advanced. With the young he could not sympathise, because they felt not like him; and with the old, because that, though their reasonings and reflections arrived at the same conclusions, they had not journeyed by the same road. They had travelled by the beaten one of experience, but he had abridged the road, having been hurried over it by the passions which were still unexhausted and ready to go in search of new discoveries. The wisdom thus prematurely acquired by Byron being the forced fruit of circumstances and travail acting on an excitable mind, instead of being the natural production ripened by time, was, like all precocious advantages, of comparatively little utility; it influenced his words more than his deeds,

and wanted that patience and forbearance towards the transgressions of others that is best acquired by having suffered from and repented our own.

It would be a curious speculation to reflect how far the mind of Byron might have been differently operated on, had he, instead of going to Greece in his early youth, spent the same period beneath the genial climate and surrounded by the luxuries of Italy. We should then, most probably have had a "Don Juan" of a less reprehensible character, and more excusable from the youth of its author, followed in natural succession, by atoning works produced by the autumnal sun of maturity, and the mellowing touches of experience instead of his turning from the more elevated tone of "Childe Harold" to "Don Juan." Each year, had life been spared him, would have corrected the false wisdom that had been the bane of Byron, and which, like the fruit so eloquently described by himself as growing on the banks of the Dead Sea, that was lovely to the eye, but turned to ashes when tasted, was productive only of disappointment to him, because he mistook it for the real fruit its appearance resembled, and found only bitterness in its taste.

There was that in Byron which would have yet nobly redeemed the errors of his youth, and the misuse of his genius, had length of years been granted him; and, while lamenting his premature death, our regret is rendered the more poignant by the reflection, that we are deprived of works which, tempered by an understanding arrived at its meridian, would have had all the genius, without the immorality of his more youthful productions, which, notwithstanding their defects, have formed an epoch in the literature of his country.

THE HONEY-MOON.

GALERIA; OR THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

FLOWERS OF LOVELINESS.

GEMS OF BEAUTY, 1837, 1838.

THE

HONEY-MOON.

"Some persons pay for a month of honey with a life of vinegar."

Novels and comedies end generally in a marriage, because, after that event, it is supposed that nothing remains to be told. This supposition is erroneous, as the history of many a wedded pair might exemplify: for, how many hearts have fallen away from their allegiance, after hands have been joined by the saffron-robed god, which had remained true, while suffering all the pangs that, from time immemorial, have attended the progress of the archer boy!

Passion—possession—what a history is comprised in these two words! But how often might its moral be conveyed in a third—indifference!

Marriage, we are told, is the portal at which Love resigns his votaries to the dominion of sober Reason; but, alas! many have so little predilection for his empire, that they rather endeavor to retain the illusions of the past—gone for ever—than to content themselves with the reality in their power.

During the days of courtship, the objects beloved are viewed through a magic mirror, which gives only perfections to the sight; but, after marriage, a magnifying glass seems to supply its place, which draws objects so unpleasingly near, that even the most trivial defects are made prominent. Courtship is a dream; marriage, the time of awaking. Fortunate are they who can lay aside their visions for the more commonplace happiness of life, without disappointment and repining.

The hero and heroine of our sketch were not of these. They had loved passionately—wildly. Their parents had, from motives of prudence, opposed their union, considering them as too young to enter a state which requires more wisdom to render it one of happiness, than most of its votaries are disposed to admit.

This opposition produced its natural result—an increase of violence in the passion of the lovers. Henri de Bellevalle, our hero, was ready to commit any action, however rash, to secure the hand of Hermance de Montesquieu; and she did all that a well-brought up young French lady could be expected to do—she fell dangerously ill. Her illness and danger drove her lover to desperation; while it worked so effectually on the fears of her parents, that they yielded a reluctant consent to the marriage, which was to be solemnised the moment that she was restored to health. The first interview between the lovers was truly touching: both declared that they must have died, had their marriage not been agreed to; and both firmly believed what they asserted.

Henri de Bellevalle, being now received as the future husband of Hermance, passed nearly the whole of his time with her, seated by the *chaise-longue* of the convalescent; marking with joyful heart the return of health's roses to her delicate cheek, and promising her unchanging, devoted, eternal love.

"Yes, dearest Hermance," would he say, "when once you are mine, *wholly* mine, I shall have no will but yours; never shall I quit your presence. Oh! how tormenting it is to be forced to leave you—to be told by your mother, that I fatigue you by the length of my visits, and to be absent from you so many long and weary hours! And you, Hermance, do you feel as I do, do you mourn my absence, and count with impatience the hour for our meeting?"

The answer may be guessed: yet, though tender as youthful and loving lips could utter, it scarcely satisfied the jealous and *exigeant* lover.

"But will you always love me as at present?" asked the timid girl. "I have *heard* such strange tales of the difference between the lover and the husband: nay, indeed, I have *seen;* for the Viscomte de Belmonte *now* leaves my poor friend, Elise, for whole hours; yet you may remember, that before *they* were married, he, too, could hardly bear to be absent from her side. Ah! were *you* to change like him, I should be wretched."

"You wrong yourself and me, my adored Hermance, by supposing me capable of acting like de Belmonte; and, besides, your poor friend, though a very charming person, does not resemble *you.* Ah: what woman ever did? If she only possessed one half your charms, he could not tear himself away from her. No! dearest; years shall only prove that my passion for you can know no decrease, and never, never shall the husband be less ardent than the lover! I have planned all our future life; it shall pass as a summer day—bright and genial. We will retire from Paris, which I have hated ever since I have loved you; its noise, its tumultuous pleasures distract me. I could not bear to see you gazed at, followed and admired. No, I feel my Hermance, that it would drive me mad. But you, my beloved, will you not sigh to leave the pleasures of the metropolis, and to exchange a crowd of admirers for one devoted heart?"

"How can you ask such a question?" replied Hermance, pouting her pretty lip, and placing her little white hand within his; "I shall be delighted to leave Paris; for *I* could not bear to see you talking to the Duchess de Montforte, and a dozen other women, as you used to do, when I first knew you; and when all my young friends used to remark, how strange it was that the married women occupied the attention of the young men so much, that they scarcely took any notice of us spinsters. I should be very jealous, Henri, I can tell you, were you to show more than distant politeness to any woman but me."

And her smooth brow became for a moment contracted, at the recollection of his former publicly marked attentions to certain ladies of fashion.

The little white hand was repeatedly pressed to his lips, as he assured her, again and again, that it would be even irksome to him to be compelled to converse with any woman but herself; and her brow resumed its former unruffled calmness.

"I have taken the most beautiful cottage orné, at Bellevue; it is now fitting up by Le Sage, as if to receive a fairy queen. *Such* a boudoir! How you will like it! We will walk, ride, drive, read, draw and sing together; in short, we shall never be a moment asunder: but, perhaps, Hermance, you will get tired of me."

"How cruel, how unjust, to suppose it possible!" was the answer.

In such day-dreams did the hours of convalescence of the fair invalid pass away; interrupted only by the pleasant task of examining and selecting the various articles for her *trousseau*, rendered all the pleasanter by the impassioned compliments of the lover, who declared that, while each and all were most becoming, they still borrowed their last grace from her whom they were permitted to adorn.

He taught her to look forward to wedlock as a state of uninterrupted happiness, where love was for ever to bestow his sunny smiles and never to spread his wings. They were to be free from all the ills to which poor human nature is subject. Sorrow, or sickness, they dreamt not of; and even "ennui," that most alarming of all the evils in a French man or woman's catalogue, they feared not; for how could it reach two people who had such a delightful and inexhaustible subject of conversation as was offered to *themselves?*

At length the happy morn arrived: and, after the celebration of the marriage, the wedded pair, contrary to all established usage in France, on similar occasions left Paris, and retired to the cottage orné, at Bellevue.

The first few days of bridal felicity, marked by delicate and engrossing attentions, and delicious flatteries, flew quickly by; reiterated declarations of perfect happiness were daily, hourly, exchanged; and the occasional interruption to their *tête-à-tête*, offered by the visits of friends was found to be the only drawback to their enjoyment.

After the lapse of a week, however, our wedded lovers became a little more sensible to the claims of friendship. Fewer confidential glances were now exchanged between them, expressive of their impatience at the lengthened visits of their acquaintances; they began to listen with something like interest to the gossip of Paris, and not unfrequently extended their hospitality to those who were inclined to

accept it. In short they evinced slight symptoms of a desire to enter again into society, though they declared to each other that this change arose merely from their wish of not appearing ill-bred, or unkind, to their acquaintances. They even found that such casual interruptions served to give a new zest to the delights of their *tête-à-têtes*. Yet, each remarked in secret, that "a change had come over the spirit of their dream;" and that, when no visiters dropped in, the days seemed unusually long and monotonous. *They* were ashamed to acknowledge this alteration, and endeavored to conceal their feelings by increased demonstrations of affection; but the forced smiles of both insensibly extended to yawns; and they began to discover, that there must be something peculiarly heavy in the atmosphere to produce such effects.

When they drove, or rode out, they no longer sought the secluded wooded lanes in the romantic neighborhood, as they had invariably done during the first ten days of their marriage; but kept on the high road, or the frequented one in the Bois de Boulogne. Hermance observed with a sigh, that Henri not unfrequently turned his head to observe some fair equestrian who galloped by them; and Henri discovered with some feeling allied to pique, that Hermance had eyes for every distinguished-looking cavalier whom they encountered; though, to be sure, it was but a transient glance that she bestowed on them. Each was aware that the change equally operated on both; but neither felt disposed to pardon it in the other. Hermance most felt it; for, though conscious of her own desire to see, and be seen again, she was deeply offended that her husband betrayed the same predilection for society. They became silent and abstracted.

"I am sure," would Hermance say to herself, "he is now regretting the gaieties of Paris; and this fickleness after only two weeks of marriage! It is too bad; but men are shocking creatures! Yet I must own Paris is much more agreeable than Bellevue; heigh ho! I wish we were back there. How I long to show my beautiful dresses, and my pearls, at the soirées! and when Henri sees me admired, as I am sure I shall be, he will become as attentive and as amusing as he used to be. Yes! Paris is the only place, where lovers are kept on the *qui-vive* by a constant round of gaieties, instead of sinking into a state of apathy, by being left continually dependent on each other."

While these reflections were passing in the mind of Hermance, Henri was thinking that it was very strange that she no longer amused or interested him so much as a few weeks before.

"Here am I," he would say to himself "shut up in this retirement, away from all my occupations and amusements, leading nearly as effeminate a life as Achilles at Syros, devoting all my time to Hermance; and yet she does not seem sensible of the sacrifice I am making. Women are very selfish creatures: there is she, as abstracted as if two years had elapsed since our marriage, instead of two weeks; and, I dare be sworn, wishing herself back at Paris, to display her *trousseau*, and be admired. This fickleness is too bad! but women are all the same: I wish we were back at Paris. I wonder whether they miss me much at the club?"

Henri no longer flatteringly applauded the toilet of Hermance—a want of attention which no woman, and least of all a French woman, is disposed to pardon. He could now (and the reflection wounded her self-love) doze comfortably, while she sang one of her favorite songs—songs which only a few weeks before, had called forth his passionate plaudits. He no longer dwelt in rapturous terms on her beauty; and she, consequently, could not utter the blushing, yet gratified, disclaimers to such compliments, or return them by similar ones. No wonder, then, that their conversation, having lost its chief charm, was no longer kept up with spirit, but sank into common-place observations.

"Yes!" Hermance would mentally own; "he is changed—cruelly changed."

She was forced to admit that he was still kind, gentle, and affectionate: but was kindness, gentleness, and affection, sufficient to supply the place of the rapturous, romantic felicity she had anticipated? No! Hermance felt they were not; and pique mingled in her disappointment. These reflections would fill her eyes with tears; and a certain degree of reserve was assumed towards Henri, that tended not to impart animation to his languid, yet invariably affectionate attentions.

Each day made Henri feel, still more forcibly, the want of occupation. He longed for a gallop, a day's hunting, or shooting; in short, for any manly amusement to be partaken of with some of his former companions.

Hercules playing the distaff could not be more out of his natural element than was our new married Benedict, shut up for whole hours in the luxurious boudoir of his wife; or sauntering round, and round again, through the pretty, but confined, pleasure-ground, which encircled his cottage. It is true, he could ride out with Hermance; but then she was so timid an equestrian, that a gallop was a feat of horsemanship she dared not essay: and to leave her with his groom, while *he* galloped, would be uncivil. After they had taken their accustomed ride, they invariably strolled, arm in arm, the usual number of turns in the pleasure-ground; repeated nearly the same observations, that the flowers, weather, and points of view, had so frequently elicited; looked at their watches, and were surprised to find it was not yet time to dress for dinner. At length that hour arrived, regarded by some as the happiest in the twenty-four; and our wedded pair found themselves at table, with better appetites and less sentiment than lovers are supposed to possess. In short, the stomachs seemed more alive than the hearts—a fact which rather shocked the delicacy of the gentle Hermance.

During the first few bridal days, their servants had been dismissed from attendance in the *salle á manger* because their presence was deemed a restraint. Besides, Henri liked to help Hermance himself, without the intervention of a servant; and, with the assistance of dumb-waiters, their *tête-à-tete* dinners had passed off as they said deliciously.

In the course of a fortnight, however, they required so many little acts of attendance, that it was deemed expedient to dismiss the dumb-waiters, and call in the aid of their living substitutes.

"How tiresome it is of our cook," said Henri, "to give us the same *potage* continually!"

"Did you not examine the *menu?*" replied Hermance.

"I scarcely looked at it," was the answer; "for I hate ordering dinners; or, in truth, knowing what I am to have at that repast, until I see it; and here, I vow (as the servant uncovered the *entrées*,) are the eternal *côtelettes d'agneau*, and *filets de volaille*, which we have had so often, that I am fatigued with seeing them."

"Do you not remember, *cher ami*," said Hermance, "that you told me you liked *soupe au riz* better than any other, and that the *entrées* now before us, are precisely those which you said you preferred?"

"Did I, love?" replied Henri, with an air of nonchalance; well, then, the fact is, we have had them so frequently of late that I am tired of them; one tires of every thing after a time."

A deeper tint on the cheek of Hermance, and a tear which trembled in her eye, might have told Henri that his last observation had given rise to some painful reflections in her mind. But, alas! both blush and tear were unnoticed by him, as he was busily engaged in discussing the *filets de volaille*.

"You do not eat, dear Hermance," said Henri at length having done ample justice to the decried *entrées*—"let me give you a little of this *roti*, it is very tender."

"It is only more unfortunate for that,"* replied Hermance, with a deep sigh; "but I cannot eat; and with difficulty she suppressed the tears that filled her eyes, while a smile stole over the lips of her husband at her sentimental reproach.

Hermance felt hurt at the smile, and offended, at observing that Henri continued to partake as copiously of the *roti* as he had previously done of the *entrées*. How unfeeling, how indelicate, to continue to devour when *she* had refused to eat!

As soon as dinner was concluded, and the servants had withdrawn. Henri remarked, for the first time, that the eyes of his wife were dimmed with tears.

"How is this, dearest!" exclaimed he, "you have been weeping—are you ill?" and he attempted to take her hand; but it was withdrawn, and her face averted, while she applied her handkerchief to her gushing eyes, as she wept with uncontrolled emotion. "Speak to me, I beseech you, Hermance!" continued Henri, endeavoring again to take her hand; "how have I offended you?"

"I see, I see it all, but too plainly," sobbed the weeping Hermance; "you no longer love me! I have observed your growing indifference day after day, and tried not to believe the cruel change; but now," and here her tears streamed afresh, "I can no longer doubt your fickle nature, when I hear you avow that you get tired of every thing—which means every person; and this to me—to me, who, only a few weeks ago, you professed to adore! Oh! it is too cruel! why did I marry?" and here sobs interrupted her words.

"You wrong me! indeed you do, dear Hermance: I said one tires of things; but

* The words used by a French lady to her husband on a similar occasion.

I never said, or meant, that one gets tired of persons. Come, this is childish; let me wipe these poor eyes;" and he kissed her brow, while gently performing the operation.

"Then, why have you seemed so different of late;" sobbed Hermance, letting him now retain the hand he pressed to his lips.

"In what has the difference consisted, dear love?" asked Henri.

"You no longer seem delighted when I enter the room, or join you in the garden, after being absent half an hour."

"*Half* an hour!" reiterated Henri, with a faint smile.

"Yes! a *whole* half hour," replied Hermance, placing an emphasis on the word "whole." "You used to appear enchanted when I came into the salon, at Paris, and always flew to meet me. You never admire my dress now, though you were wont to examine and commend all that I wore; and you doze while I am singing the songs which, a few weeks ago, threw you into ecstacies." Poor Hermance wept afresh at the recapitulation of the symptoms of her husband's growing indifference, while he soothed her with loving words and tender epithets.

Having in some measure reassured her, by his affectionate manner, harmony was again established; but the veil was removed from the eyes of both, never again to be resumed. They perceived that the love, unceasing and ecstatic, of which they had dreamt before their union, was a chimera existing only in imagination; and they awoke, with sobered feelings, to seek content in rational affection, instead of indulging in romantic expectations of a happiness that never falls to the lot of human beings: each acknowledging, with a sigh, that even in a marriage of love, the brilliant anticipations of imagination are never realised; that disappointment awaits poor mortals even in that brightest portion of existence—The Honey-moon.

GALERIA;

OR,

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

"Pourquoi tous les hommes ne voyent-ils pas sans une émotion profonde les ruines même les plus humbles? Ne serait-ce pas tout simplement pour eux un image du malheur dont ils sentent si diversement le poids? Si les cimetières font penser à la mort, un village abandonné fait songer aux peins de la vie; mais la mort est un malheur prévu, tandis que les peines de la vie sont infinies; or, l'infini n'est-il pas le secret des grandes mélancolies?"—BALZAC.

"WOULD the signora like to see the deserted village?" asked the master of the post-house where we stopped to refresh our horses, on our route from Rome to the castle of Bracciano; "it is not above a quarter of a mile from this place, and the few strangers who travel our road all go to examine it."

Luigi, for so was the master of the post-house named, was a handsome, intelligent-looking man: his military bearing, and the mustache that shaded his lip, denoted that he had served in the army; and a politeness and gentleness in his manner, bore evidence that he had been accustomed to present himself before ladies: his language was correct, and, as well as his appearance and manner, indicated that he had seen much of the world; while a certain romantic air betrayed that its contact had not obliterated the natural bias of his character, which was that of a reflective and sentimental turn. "There stands the village," continued he, pointing to a mass of buildings seated on an eminence overlooking the fertile valley of Arona, along which the clear and sparkling river of that name glided like a silvery serpent, now showing itself sporting through verdant meadows, and then losing itself amidst wooded knolls. We set out to view Galeria, our communicative host acting as guide, and, after a short walk, found ourselves on a rustic bridge, at the base of the eminence on which the ruined village is seated, and which, seen from this spot, has a most picturesque appearance.

Crossing the bridge, we ascended a steep and winding road, each turn of which presented new beauties, and arrived at an arched gate of stone-work, surmounted by a clock, whose dial still remained, though the hands, that had been wont to mark the flight of time, had disappeared. This gate formed the entrance to Galeria, and the view from it was beautiful. The village consisted of about fifty houses, containing from three to five rooms each, many of them having their rude walls covered with gaudy prints of saints and martyrs, attired in robes of glaring scarlet, ultra-marine blue, and bright yellow, and possessing little of the beauty of holiness, being most hideous to behold; the artist who designed them having carefully avoided all violation of the scriptural commandment, "not to make unto ourselves the likeness of any thing that is in the heaven above, on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth."

The doors and windows still remained, and some wooden articles of furniture were scattered around; the ashes stood on the deserted hearths, wild flowers and ivy nearly covered the windows, and innumerable birds were flitting about and sending forth their joyful notes. Each house had its garden, once neat and trim, as our guide assured us, but now presenting little wildernesses, intermingled with bright flowers peeping forth from the tangled mazes of shrubs and weeds that had nearly overgrown them. A silence, interrupted only by the carols of the birds, reigned around; and, as we pulled the latch of the doors of many of these humble cottages, and entered the deserted chambers, the echoes of our steps sent forth a melancholy sound.

A small cemetery, with its wooden and stone crosses, nearly covered by briars, nettles, and weeds, stood at one side of the village; and on the other was a deep well, with its bucket and chain, the iron thickly coated by the rust which was the consequence of its long disuse and exposure to the weather. Near to this neglected implement, was a stone bench, sheltered by a clump of trees, where, probably, the aged peasants had been wont to enjoy the delicious evenings, only to be found in a southern climate: and in front of it was a level space, which looked as if it had been the play-ground, or the scene of the dances of the young.

A small chapel, with its cross and bell, a fragment of the rope for ringing the latter still hanging from the wall, showed that the humble inhabitants of this secluded spot were not neglectful of their religion. Here all the drama of life had been performed, from the *entrée* to the *exit*—but where were the performers? Not a soul was to be seen; not even a domestic animal passing through the grass-grown streets—all, all were fled.

"Ah! signora," said our host of the post-house, in answer to my exclamation, "it is a long and a melancholy story; but, if you wish, I will relate it—my poor mother, peace be to her soul, often repeated it to me, as we sat on the bench in the porch, when the moonlight was silvering the old gate-way of Galeria, and shining on the dial of the clock, which looked like the face of a spirit. Well, signora, forty years ago, this same deserted village was a scene of active and cheerful industry—parents surrounded by their children and grandchildren; young people who had grown up together, and learned to love, ere yet the meaning of the word was known to them; for, in our sunny clime, signora, we experience the passion before reason is sufficiently mature to enable us to combat its violence, we are conscious of either the cause or the consequences. In the lonely and quiet spot over which we are now pacing, the sounds of the guitar and tambourine mingled with the hum of joyous voices every evening, when amusement succeeded the labors of the day. Among all the young women of Galeria, Vincenza Martelli was the most beautiful; her slight and graceful form lost none of its charms in the pretty camiciuola* and short full plaited gonella† of our Roman peasant dress; and her glossy raven hair appeared still more black and shining in contrast with the snowy whiteness of the fettolla,‡ that was laid in a square fold over it. Her straight brows, and the bright eyes that sparkled beneath them, gave expression to her oval and clear brown face; and, if the rose shone not on her cheek, the rich red of her lip made one forget its absence. Her teeth, signora, my poor mother used to say, were as white as young almonds when they first leave the shell; and her laugh was as joyous as sunshine. The neighbors used to pause to look at her as she returned from the well, an amphora of water on her head so balanced that not a single drop escaped, though her hands did not touch it; and her step was so light, that it seemed as if her little feet would not crush a flower. Every one talked of her beauty except Giovanni Spinelli, who felt its power the most—he was never tired of looking at her; and, even while they were yet children, the neighbors used to call them the lovers.

"Giovanni was the handsomest youth in the village, and perhaps it was for this reason that rumor first distinguished him as a fitting partner for Vincenza. He sought for her the ripest grapes and most melting figs; the first violets of the spring and the last rose of summer were sure to be hers; for it is only by such simple gifts, signora, that the poor and humble can show their affection. Vincenza would receive them with pleasure, and repay Giovanni with a smile and kind words; nor was a glance wanting, such as love alone can bestow. She would place the flowers in her hair and bosom, where they remained until, seeking her lowly couch, she consigned them to a vase of water, fresh from the fountain, and placed them on the table close by her pillow, beneath the picture of the Madonna. At other times, she would weave the flowers into a garland for the large image of her patron saint that adorned the chapel; and it was allowed, that no girl in the village could weave a garland to be compared with that of Vincenza.

"The affection of Vincenza and Giovanni had grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength; neither could remember when it had commenced, or when they had been able to support existence asunder. Together they sang the love ditties that they played on the guitar, or danced the tarantella to the merry sound of the tambourine; together they had knelt and prayed before the shrine of the Ma-

* Bodice. † Petticoat. ‡ Plaited kerchief.

donna, and offered up votive flowers before the images of their tutelar saints. Each had become associated with the thoughts, feelings, dreams, and hopes of the other; they had never contemplated the possibility of even a temporary separation; their little hamlet was the world to them, the boundary of their wishes, and the scene where their happiness was to be crowned. The chapel now before us, signora, was viewed by the lovers as the place where one day their vows were to be sanctified, their children to be baptised, and their own bodies deposited previously to their consignment to their last narrow home—all this had occurred to all who, under their observation, or within their knowledge, had, like them, grown together, loved, and married; and, therefore, Vincenza and Giovanni believed it would be their fate. This supposed certainty of the future threw an additional shade of tenderness over the feelings of the young people: they wholly depended on each other for happiness; and the few hours of absence that the manual labors of Giovanni in the fields occasioned, were sustained and counted with impatience by both. How often has Vincenza looked to the west to see whether the sun gave token of seeking his couch, that being the signal of Giovanni's return! Seldom had he repaired to the field without bearing in his hat a bouquet of flowers, the gift of Vincenza; and as seldom did he return without bringing some rustic offering to her. Ah! signora, the richest gifts which the grand can bestow, yield not such pure pleasure as the humble offerings of the poor and lowly! I, signora, have seen much of the world; I have served in the army, and been many years a courier, during which time I have been employed in some noble families; and, on occasions of marriages, have seen jewels which might ransom a prince, and whose dazzling lustre made my eyes ache, without their conferring half the delight that a simple riband, or kerchief of silk, has excited in the breast of one of our peasants, when presented by the hand of love. Ay, you grand ones of the earth, signora, have so many different sources of gratification, that, when you love, it is only another enjoyment added to your vast store; but, with us, love constitutes the whole, the sole, the only one! You have each your different pursuits, your different pleasures, and can amuse yourselves so well when asunder, that you depend not on each other for happiness. Forgive me, signora, for my boldness in thus expressing my reflections, and permit me to return to my narrative.

"So genuine had been the affection of the lovers, that it created a sympathy and respect throughout the hamlet: their parents treated them as affianced; and each rural belle, or beau, quoted them as models of example to the other, when dissatisfied by negligence or coquetry; for, even in the most remote hamlets, signora, a woman is still a woman.

"Many years before the period to which I refer, a dangerous malady had reduced the father of Giovanni to the brink of the grave; and the despairing wife had vowed before her patron saint, that, if her husband recovered, she would devote her eldest son to the church. The illness terminated favorably; and she prepared to fulfil the duty she had imposed upon herself. Andrea was the name of the youth upon whom this rigid fortune was entailed; but, happily, his calm, contemplative turn of mind rendered him not unfitted for its endurance. While yet a child, he was treated as a chosen vessel; one who was to be an intermediate point between those dear to him and the God he was to serve. The monastic habit was assumed by him ere he had yet quitted the plays of boyhood; and he met with affectionate indulgence from the knowledge that he was doomed soon to leave his native village and all that he loved, to live in cloistered solitude at a few miles' distance. The spires of his convent you may see yonder, signora; but they are more visible at sunset, when the last rays of the bright luminary tinge them. My mother has told me, that often and often did she see Andrea, with Vincenza and Giovanni leaning on his shoulders, their arms crossing as they leant on him, pause to watch those glittering spires fading in the horizon; and the lovers would draw closer to Andrea, reminded by them that soon *he* would be torn from them, and be condemned to the solitude of that cloister. How many vows of affection did they interchange with this dear brother! Andrea, in return, promising to pray for their happiness in his daily orisons before the altar, and in his cell. They dwelt on the visits they should make him; the flowers, fruit, and new honey, they would bring him: Giovanni archly adding, in spite of the blushing cheek of Vincenza, which she vainly attempted to conceal on the shoulder of Andrea, that their first-born son should be named Andrea.

"Such was the fascination of this mild and affectionate youth, that his presence was felt to be a source of pleasure, instead of a restraint to the lovers: he was scarcely

less dear to Vincenza than to Giovanni, and was necessary to the happiness of both. He had now reached his seventeeth year: Giovanni was a year younger; and Vincenza had completed her fifteenth birthday. In a few days, Andrea was to enter the convent; and his approaching departure cast a gloom over the hamlet. At this period, continued and heavy rain had swollen the Arona; and, instead of the blue and limpid stream which you now perceive, it had become a rapid and discolored flood. A pet lamb, given by Giovanni to Vincenza, had wandered from the hamlet to the bank of the river, into which it unfortunately fell as she approached to secure it. Unmindful of the depth and the rapidity of the current, Vincenza rushed in to save her favorite; and was soon carried away by the force of the torrent. She was on the point of sinking, when Andrea arrived at the spot, and threw himself into the river, to rescue her. He seized her by the long tresses that escaped from the bodkin that confined them, and drew her towards the shore; when, overcome by the exertion, and borne down by the weight of the monastic cloak, he was carried away by the current, and sank to rise no more, at the very moment his brother arrived to snatch Vincenza from the arms of death.

"Giovanni would have left his Vincenza lifeless, as she appeared, on the bank, and have rushed into the water to share Andrea's fate; but that he was forcibly withheld by some of the peasants, who, returning from their labor, had arrived in time to witness the catastrophe, and to save Giovanni from suicide! It was many hours ere Vincenza was restored to animation, or that she became sensible of the danger she had escaped; but, when returning consciousness brought the fearful scene before her, she scarcely might be said to rejoice in her restoration to an existence that she knew was purchased by the life of Andrea; and throwing herself into the arms of Giovanni, and mingling her tears with his, she prayed him to forgive her for having deprived him of a brother.

"When the lifeless corse of Andrea was discovered, his clenched hand still grasped a tress of raven hair, which even death itself had failed to compel him to relinquish; and his contracted brow, and compressed lips, marked the struggle he had made to save her to whom it had belonged. Bitter were the tears that bedewed his pale forehead, while, bending over him, Vincenza and Giovanni passionately expressed their resolution, ever and fondly to cherish the memory of his virtues and disastrous fate: then, feeling that in losing this dear and trusted brother, one of the links of the chain that united them was broken, they vowed henceforth to be all to each other. Alas! they foresaw not that this terrible affliction, their first in the school of trials, would be the cause of so much future misery, and that their lives, hitherto so tranquil and happy, were never more to know peace.

"No sooner had the mortal remains of Andrea been consigned to the grave, bedewed by the tears of all the village, than the mother declared that Giovanni, her only surviving son, must be devoted to the church, in the place of him she had lost. In vain were the tears and despair of the lovers, rendered now doubly dear to each other by the grief that Andrea's death had caused them—in vain were the intercessions of relatives, friends, and neighbors—the superstitious and bigoted mother was resolved on the sacrifice of her child, of whose fate she now became the sole arbitress, in consequence of the death of her husband, which occurred in a few days after that of Andrea. To his wife, the deceased parent, a weak and good-natured man, and the richest in the village, bequeathed all his wealth; with the chief portion of which she proclaimed her intention of endowing the convent as soon as Giovanni should pronounce his vows. This *declaration* enlisted the whole of the monks on her side; and, entreaties, representations, and promises, having failed to produce any effect on Giovanni, an order was procured from the commandant of a neighboring town, for a party of military, to tear him from the arms of his agonised and despairing Vincenza, and bear him to the convent; where he was kept a close prisoner.

"The deep anguish of Vincenza failed to produce any effect on the obdurate mother of her lover; nay, the poor girl was looked upon by the inflexible fanatic, as an impious creature, who wanted to place herself between her son and heaven. Vincenza used to sit for hours on a rustic seat that commanded a view of the convent spires; and, when the deepening shades of evening hid them from her sight, she would return, pale and silent, to her cheerless home, and throw herself on that pillow, from which peaceful slumber had now fled for ever.

"The unhappiness of the youthful lovers had thrown a gloom over the whole village; for, though a superstitious dread of the

monks had checked the expressions of the sympathy all felt, it had but rendered the feeling more profound. The sounds of the guitar, or tambourine, were no longer heard to break on the stillness of evening: gloom had succeeded to cheerfulness in the lately happy village, and all was changed. Poor Giovanni had undergone a system of persecution, instigated even less by superstition than by the cupidity of the monks, who wished to ensure the wealth promised by his mother. Coercion had been tried in vain; persuasion, too, had hitherto failed to induce him to repeat the vows that must separate him for ever from his Vincenza; but, when he discovered that on his compliance depended his sole chance of ever again leaving the walls of his convent, he yielded a reluctant and painful assent; and pronounced himself the servant of God; while his heart beat tumultuously with an earthly passion.

"Six additional dreary months were added to those already passed in this monastic prison, ere Giovanni was permitted to pass its guarded portals. Each hour of this period had been counted with bitterness of feeling by Vincenza; who sometimes accused her lover of weakness, or inconstancy, in yielding to their separation, (unconscious of the persecution he was undergoing;) but she still oftener wept their fate, shedding those bitter tears that sear the cheek on which they fall, and refresh not the heart from which they spring.

"The mother of Giovanni was taken dangerously ill; and when her recovery was hopeless, her son was permitted for the first time to leave his convent, that he might close her dying eyes. He arrived but in time to perform this filial office; for, in a few minutes after he had entered her chamber, she expired. By her bedside he found Vincenza, who had nursed her through her malady; and who, worn out by grief, and watching by the sick-bed, was scarcely to be recognised.

"Those who were in the outer room declared, that for some time they heard convulsive sobs, and deep groans, mingled with whispers; and then a *silence*, befitting the chamber of death, prevailed. When an hour had elapsed, and not a sound had manifested itself to the attentive ears of the anxious listeners, they entered the room, and to their utter astonishment found only the lifeless corpse of the mother; the face still wet with the tears of Giovanni and Vincenza. A door, that conducted from the chamber into the garden, was open, and evidently indicated the mode of the lovers' escape. Whither had they gone? was the question all asked; but none could solve. Could Vincenza, the good, the pure-minded Vincenza, have eloped with a priest? No! so daring an impiety was too dreadful even to be imagined; and yet, how else account for their disappearance? The two monks who had been sent to guard Giovanni from the convent, returned thither to tell the dreadful tale of sacrilege; and the superior despatched emissaries through all the surrounding country, to arrest the unhappy, and, as they were termed, impious pair. Still no tidings could be obtained of them; no one had seen—no one had heard any trace of them. The monks took possession of all that the deceased widow had left; and, by their rapacity, disgusted all the inhabitants of Galeria. Well, signora, various were the conjectures formed on every side as to the probable fate of the lovers: they were believed to be living in sin together in some distant part of the country, and, truth to say, many people were more inclined to pity than to condemn them.

"Summer had come again; the waters of the Arona had receded from its banks, and some peasants had entered the bed of the river, to obtain gravel for the repair of the road, when their attention was excited by a dark mass half shrouded by sand. They removed it; and discovered at the very spot where Andrea had perished, the bodies of the lovers locked in each other's arms, and wrapped in the monastic cloak of Giovanni!

"My mother saw them, signora: and she told me that the long tresses of Vincenza were wound round the ill-fated youth, as if to prevent their remains from being separated in death.

"They were the last who were ever placed in the cemetery; here, signora, is their grave, the only one preserved free from the weeds and nettles that overgrow the others; for my poor mother performed this humble task while she lived, in memory of their fidelity and misfortunes; and since her death I have faithfully fulfilled the office.

"The monks, enraged at the pity displayed by the inhabitants of Galeria, pronounced a curse on the village, which so alarmed its natives, that they fled the spot, leaving nearly all their household goods and utensils behind; and this became the Deserted Village."

FLOWERS OF LOVELINESS.

ROSES.

"Therefore with thy soft breath came floating by
A thousand images of love and grief."
MRS. HEMANS.

HELENA.

SISTER, behold these brightly-tinted Roses!*
How fresh the blush upon their silken leaves!
With the clear dew-drop, glancing in the sun,
As bright as diamond, with its ray intense,
Shining the most, when most 'tis shone upon.
Does it not glad thy heart to look on them?
Are they not glorious ministers of Heaven,
Shedding their sweetness on the summer earth,
To tell us of *His* love, who sent them here?

HERMIONE.

Yes, mine own Sister; they, in truth, are fair!
But, ah! so fleetly do their brief lives pass,
That even when their bloom the richest glows,
I, looking forward to its swift decay,
Feel a strange sadness as I gaze on them,
And thoughts of death come o'er me.

HELENA.

Is't not strange,
That we, who draw our lives from the same source,
Whose hearts are warmed by the same purple stream,
Who love each other—(do we not dear sister?)

HERMIONE.

Most fondly, truly—

HELENA.

——well, then, is't not strange
That what awakens only joy in me,
Should fill thy soul with images of gloom?

HERMIONE.

No, not of gloom—'tis but a gentle grief—
Because I feel, that like to all that's fair
Soon may these bright flowers droop—and fade—and die.
'Twas thus with her—our lost, our sainted ANNE—
Blooming and bright as Roses in their prime,
And like them, fragile, too. A few brief days—
A Spring of joy—a Summer of decay—
And Autumn found her not!—Dost thou remember?

HELENA.

O, my sweet sister! canst thou ask me this,
When I most think of her in loving thee,
Who art so like her in thy gentleness?

HERMIONE.

I doubted not thy sad remomb'ring love—
I meant but to recal her last brief hours,
Which every dying Rose—

HELENA.

Brings back to thee.
While I—

HERMIONE.

Nay, weep not thus, my precious one!

HELENA.

Ay, well, how well! do I remember still,
The wond'rous beauty of her hectic blush;
Th' unearthly lustre of her sparkling eyes;
Her pallid brow, by Death's cold finger trac'd

* There is a flower more frequently introduced in the mythological garland of fable, than our own favorite Rose, the national badge of England A popular writer in France mentions this flower as follows: "Cette fleur, qui fut appellée par les anciens *la splendeur des plantes*, est si belle, son parfum est si delicieux, qu'on en a fait un emblême universel. La Rose est le symbole des sentimens les plus divers, des choses les plus opposées entr'elles; la piété en décore les temples, l'amour et la gaiete en forment des couronnes, la douleur, l'effeuille sur les tombeaux, la pudeur et la chasteté la recoivent comme le prix le plus doux et le plus glorieux."
La Botanique Historique et Litteraire.

And the long glance of tender, speechless love,
Fixed on our faces, even unto the last,
When her dear voice already was in Heaven!

HERMIONE.

When Summer brings the Roses back to us,
And their rich fragrance loads the golden air!
Like incense offered up from earth to Heaven,
And birds are all abroad—I think of her
Who walked the earth—a thing of light and hope.
Loving all nature feeling it was bliss
To live among bright, odor-breathing flowers,
And listen to the music of the woods—
I think of her, within the narrow grave,
To whom, nor sunshine, nor the breath of flowers,
Nor song of birds, can ever come again!

LILIES OF THE VALLEY.

'Tis said, the Rose, of all the flowers
That bloom within our garden bowers,
Is chosen queen:—
But more I love the Lily pale,
That lingers in my native vale,
Fair and unseen—

Save by us, simple village maids,
Who seek it in the greenwood shades,
At early morn.
When we could think our hearts had wings
Light as the bird's who gaily sings
From the old thorn.

I found the flower in a green nook,
Where crept a clear and laughing brook
The young boughs through;
And king-cups spangled all the ground,
And the pale wind-flower there was found,
And hare-bells blue.

I lov'd it for its pearly bell,
And for its scent, that sweetly fell
On the still air.
O! more than garden blossom nursed,
I lov'd it—for my hand was first
To find it there!

DAISIES.

"Flowers sweet and gay, and delicate like you;
Emblems of innocence, and beauty too.
MRS. BARBAULD.

SIMPLE flowers although ye be,*
Ye are dearly loved by me;
Simple children—ye no less
Touch me with your lowliness,
Both my native fields adorn,
Joyous as the breath of morn;
Both, when comes the dewy night,
Seek repose, in slumbers light;
And, when shines the morning ray,
Re-awaken like the day—
He was *lowly* too—the Power
Who created child and flower!

Poets have not scorned to sing
Daisies;—and a mighty king,†
Brave and pious, good and wise,
Chose one for his quaint device.
One a queen decreed to be‡
Guerdon for sweet poesy.
Flowers and children—emblems meet,
Of all things innocent and sweet;
Gifts of tenderness and love,
Sent to bless us from above,
Smile, oh! smile on me, and pour
Your fragrance round me evermore.

HEART'S-EASE.

FRANCES.

What, drooping and alone?
Turn to me—borrow sunshine from my brow—
Nay—smile, be joyous—look. I place this flower
On thy warm breast; and there should Heart's-ease dwell;
For never could it find a sweeter home.
Why—what is this? A fresh tear on thy cheek?—
Away with it! I will not have thee sad!
(*Kisses her tenderly.*)

LOUISA.

A cloud is o'er me—brooding, shadowy fears,
That dim the sunshine of my lonely mind,

* "Daisy (Bellis, taken from bellus, pretty or handsome.) Fabulous history informs us that it owes its origin to Belides, grand-daughter to Danaus, one of the Nymphs called Dryads, that presided over meadows and pastures in ancient times. Belides, whilst dancing on the grass with Ephigeus (a rural Deity,) attracted the admiration of Vertumnus (the Deity who presided over the spring and orchards,) and to escape from him she was transformed into a Daisy. Chaucher affirms that the fair Queen Alceste (wife of Admetus King of Pherœ, in Thessaly,) who sacrificed her own life to preserve that of her husband, was, for this proof of affection, transformed into a Daisy. The English name of Daisy is derived from a Saxon word, meaning Day's Eye, from the flower's closing its petals at night."

† Saint Louis avait pris pour devise, une Marguerite. The English Daisy is called Marguerite in France.

‡ Marguerite of Scotland, the first Queen of Louis the Eleventh, presented Marguerite Clotilda de Surville, a bouquet of Daisies, the leaves wrought in silver, and the flowers in gold, in acknowledgment of her poetical skill. The bouquet bore the following quaint inscription: "Marguerite d'Ecosse à Marguerite d'Helicon."

'Till all that pleas'd me once, can please no more.

FRANCES.

Thou hast been gazing on his picture, love;
Which but reminds thee *he* is far away:
'Tis this that casts a shadow on thy brow;
'Tis this that calls the tear-drop to thy cheek;
For absence darkens all the heart of love.
How, when he comes—and trust me, 'twill be soon—
How wilt thou smile at all these phantom thoughts
That chill thy spirit now!

LOUISA.

Ay—*when* he comes
(But not till then) I'll smile. O! he has stolen
My smiles away, and left me, in their stead,
Tears, bitter tears—unseemly dew for flowers;
Take back thy gift, then, dear one; it would die,
Wet by such showers—for Heart's-ease never bloom'd
On heart from its twin heart by absence reft.

VIOLETS.

Honor to her who chose this fragrant flower,
As meed befitting gentle Poesy—
'Twas a sweet thought, conceived in happy hour!
Worthy, fair Clemence!* to owe birth to thee!

Methinks 'twas pleasant, at the floral games,†
Listening, amid the Troubadours to sit,
While the gay minstrels sung their secret flames
In choicest language—Love embalm'd by Wit!

Proud was he there who won the golden prize;
Proud the bright maiden who inspired his lays;
Poets found favor then in ladies eyes;—
Ah! gentle Cousin—those were pleasant days!

Fair women were immortalised in verse;
And even when time, their rude, relentless foe,
Had dimm'd their charms, their lovers could rehearse
The beauty which they boasted—long ago!

But let us to our violets back once more,
No sweeter theme the wandering thoughts can find,
Than their dear flowers, (by poet sung of yore,)
When they are sigh'd o'er by the soft south wind.

The nymph, who blushing, from Apollo fled,
By Dian saved, a Violet became;‡
And hence, by grave mythologists, 'tis said,
The flower its blue eye droopeth still in shame.

It was 'mid violet wreaths, on Enna's mead,
That Pluto made fair Proserpine§ his own;
While Cerus stormed, (and truly she had need,)
For no such garlands deck'd his dismal throne.

And though the days of legend are gone by,
They still to every poet must be dear;
In their soft hue he sees his lady's eye—
In their rich breath she whispers in his ear.

And, as their odors they exhale around,
Though rudely crush'd upon their verdant bed,
So even Virtue, when oppress'd is found
A precious never-dying balm to shed.

HONEYSUCKLE.

See the Honeysuckle twine‖
Round this casement;—'tis a shrine
Where the heart doth incense give,
And the pure affections live
In the Mother's gentle breast,
By her smiling infant pressed.

Blessed shrine! dear, blissful home!
Source whence happiness doth come!
Round thy cheerful hearth we meet
All things beauteous, all things sweet—
Ev'ry solace of Man's life,
Mother—Daughter—Sister—Wife!

England, Isle of free and brave,
Safely guarded by the wave,
Though we seek the fairest land
That the south wind ever fanned,
Never may we hope to see
Homes so *holy* as in thee.

As the tortoise turns its head
Towards its native ocean bed,¶
Howsoever far it be
From its own beloved sea,

* Clemence Isaure, who instituted the golden violet as the prize in the floral games.—See Miss Landon's beautiful poem on the subject.

† Un des prix des jeux floraux est une Violette d'or.—*La Botanique Historique et Litteraire.*

‡ Suivant la fable, Ia, fille d'Atlas, en fuyant les poursuites d'Apollon, fut changée en Violette.

§ Les Mythologues disent que lorsque Proserpine fut enlevée par Pluton, elle cueilloit des Violettes.

‖ Chèvre-feuille.—Liens d'amour,—*Le Langage des Fleurs.*

¶ A fact in the natural history of the Tortoise.

Thus, proud Albion, evermore
Do we turn, to seek thy shore!

SNOW-DROP.

You have told me, Sister dear,
I should see our Mother's bed;
But I see no pillow here:
Where, then does she rest her head?

Tell me, Sister—ah! you weep,
Looking on that cold, cold stone!
Does our darling mother sleep
In a place so sad and lone?

This is not like her sweet room,
With its fire that glanced so gay;
There was neither chill nor gloom,
But fond words and smiles all day.

Here's a flower—the first I found,
'Gainst she wakes—she loves it well.
Ah! how still is all around!
Will she waken?—Sister, tell.

Oft I see her when I sleep,
And her kiss feel on my brow;
But when morning comes, I weep,
Just as you do, Sister, now.

Ah! you say to Heaven she's gone.
Would that we were there to-day!
Every thing's so grave and lone,
Since our mother went away!

SUN-FLOWERS.

"She, enamored of the sun,
At his departure hangs her head and weeps,
And shrouds her sweetness up, and keeps
Sad vigils, like a cloistered nun;
'Till his reviving ray appears,
Waking her beauty as he dries her tears."

MOORE.

I GAZE on yonder parting sun, ere quite he fades away—
A little lingering moment more, and all is dark and gray;
'Till morning brings him back to us, as joyous as of yore,
To smile away the tears of night, and gladness to restore.

And yet it saddens me to view his royal splendor die,
To see his glorious light go out—to think of darkness nigh,
To watch the landscape in the shades of twilight disappear;
There's melancholy in the hour—and yet, though sad 'tis dear!

O! then, what tender thoughts will steal into the pensive mind,
Like visions, such as dreams reveal, of days long left behind!
The loved, the distant and the dead, by Memory's magic power,
Are gathered round us in the shade of the sweet twilight hour.

Dost thou remember, dear one, say, when 'neath a brighter sky,
The setting of each golden day brought tears into the eye?
And oft as sunk yon orb of light into the purple sea,
Our thoughts would wing their rapid flight, *dear* England! back to thee.

Ay! like this bright and constant flower* enamored of the sun,
That follows him with burning gaze, where'er his chariot run,
So turns each fond and faithful heart, wherever wanderers roam,
To all from whom 'twas grief to part—to home—dear blessed home!

PASSION-FLOWERS.

"High o'er the pointal, deck'd with gold,
(Emblem mysterious to behold!)
A radiant cross its form expands;
Its open'ing arms appear t' embrace
The whole collective human race,
Refuge of all men in all lands."

HARTE.

Lady reading a letter. Alice entering softly behind her.

ALICE.

(*aside*) What doth my lady read?—(*steals nearer.*)
O Heavens!—the letter—all is known—and lost!
Where shall I fly? I cannot meet her eyes!
How could I hear his vows—his sweet, sweet vows!
Knowing that they were hers—my only friend—
My refuge in distress. Would I were laid
Beside my sainted mother in the grave!

LADY.

(*looks up.*) Who waits?—

ALICE.

I dare not answer!

* The Heliotrope, Hayciath and Sun-Flower, have the same peculiarity of turning to the sun; hence the various fables to which each of these flowers has given rise.

LADY.

(*turning round with forced calmness.*) Is it thou?
Alice, thou hast deceived me—'twas not well—

ALICE.

Dear Lady——

LADY.

Speak!—I'll know the worst at once!
How long has he—Lord Bertram—sought thy love?
Speak! 'ere my passion rise—(*aside*) I will be calm.
Aid me, good Angels!—Alice, speak—and fear not.

ALICE.

Dear Lady—'twas—I know not when it was
He wiled me with his tongue's sweet witchery.—
I blush to think I listened—and repent—
Ay—in the dust—ungrateful as I am
To thee, my benefactress!—O, forgive me!

LADY.

Didst thou not know him my affianced Lord?
And knowing, listened—smiled on him—was won!

ALICE.

I was not won! yet wo is me! I listened;
And let him plead to me, from day to day.
Thou lovdest him not, he swore;—or, if 'twas love—
'Twas only as a sister's, cold and pure.—
He said that thou couldst yield him without pain.
And I—(indeed I thought his words were true.)
Weakly believed—

LADY.

Alice! come hither Alice!
(*Aside*) Is it her beating heart, or mine, I hear,
Down, rebel spirit, down!
(*To her.*) Believe it still!
And wed him. Alice, he is mine no more!
And I—now leave me—I would be alone.

ALICE.

Dear Lady—but forgive me!

LADY.

I have said it;
Go—go—no more of this! (*Alice retires dejectedly.*)
Alone at last!
Am I awake? or is it all a dream?
Is this the chamber where he swore so oft,
Even by the sacred symbol which that flower*
Doth image forth upon its mystic breast,
That, next to God, he loved me—me alone!
O! *He*, who reads our inmost hearts, can tell
How mine did answer his—And all is past!
'Tis bitter! but I'll bear it as becomes
A woman—and though weak, a Christian still.
Here I resign him—let her be his bride.
Flowers! that have heard his vows, at twilight time
Breath'd, and in no cold ear—beautiful flowers!
Be now my teachers—tell this wayward heart
To suffer patiently—and look to *Him*
Who, sorrow, torture, death, sustained for me!

She kneels.—Scene closes.

* "Passion-Flowers, natives of America, are said to owe their name to the missionaries, who fir-t discovered them while travelling over the country The instruments of our Saviour's passion were thought to be represented by it. The stamens were his five wounds; the three styles, the nails by which he was fixed to the cross; the column which elevates the germen, to the cross itself; the rays of the nectary, to the crown of thorns"

LILIES.†

Is it not, dear one? sweet to see
An infant, in its purity,
Calm, slumbering, like a folded flower,
That shuts its leaves at evening hour?

O! mark, how smiles play round its mouth
Like sunrise in the genial south.
I love to think, that, while it sleeps,
Converse with angel-bands it keeps.‡

The Lilies on thy cradle flung,
Though from the milk of Juno sprung,§
And known by every bard to be
The type of spotless modesty,

Less, lovely are, fair babe! than thou
With that soft cheek, and placid brow.
Spare, spare that cheek—relentless years!
From wrinkling cares, and streaming tears!

O! why shouldst thou be doom'd to know
Of weary life th' increasing wo,
When Lilies, free from care or sin,
Stainless, do neither toil nor spin.

† The French Lis, or Fleur-de-Lis. The ancients named this plant after Iris, the messenger of the gods, and more particularly of Juno:
"The various Iris Juno sends with haste" Ovid.
"About the middle of the twelfth century, Louis the Seventh, of France, when about to undertake a second Crusade, chose the Iris for his blazon. It was hence called Fleur de Leuce, Louis Flower, and again corrupted into Fleur-de-lis. The number of Fleur-de-lis, used in emblazoning the arms of France, were reduced to three in the reign of Charles the Sixth, about the year 1381."

‡ A belief prevails in Ireland, among the peasantry, that, when children smile in their sleep, they are conversing with angels —See Mr. Lover's charming song of "*The Angel's Whisper.*"

§ "La Fable dit, que le Lis naquit du lait de Junon." *La Botanique Historique et Litteraire.*

ORANGE-FLOWERS.

FLORENCE.

O! droop not, dear one!—Cheer, thee, sister mine!
Nay, I must see thee smile, 'twill arm my heart
With courage to bear up against my grief,
And O, *what* grief! . . . . when thou art here no more
I never thought it could be hard to bind
The bridal wreath around thy polished brow;
Yet now, its odors, balmy though they be,
Breath but of parting—smile, my sister, smile!

VIOLA.

How can I smile, when, in a few brief hours,
I leave my blessed home—my childhood's home,
My Father's sheltering care—my Mother's love,
And *thee*, too, Sister of my blood and heart—
Our thoughts have been twin echoes—was't not so?
How can I choose but weep?

FLORENCE.

Bid thy soul dwell
On him who comes to claim thee for his bride.
Asks he not some return for so much love?
Be sure he does; and thou must render him
Measure o'erflowing—thou must love him well.
Adorn his side, enrich his stately home,
And make it joyous as our own fire side,
When laughter was our music.—For myself,
My fate will be to see (through mists of tears)
Thy image always—in thy vacant chair,
By thy still harp, and near the books thou lovd'st,
And near the sweet frail blossoming Orange Flowers;
And I shall hear thy voice in every breeze,
And answer thee—And then . . . . did I not bid thee
Smile out, like morning? Smile, sweet Sister, smile!
And save us both from these sad phantasies!

FORGET-ME-NOT.

Two Maidens launched a little bark,
Upon a summer day,
And as they slowly sailed from shore,
One waved a silken scarf she bore,
As she sang this roundelay:

"How blest are we,
On the bright blue sea,
Like birds that cleave the air,
With the wind that sings
In the sails—our wings
That waft us, we rock not where.

'Tis folly to grieve
For the friends we leave;
New lands—new friends we'll find,
Then away! away!
Is our burthen gay;
Let us leave all care behind."

But the other maiden pensive sat,
As they slowly sailed away;
And her head was drooped, and a tear fell o'er
The pale blue flower in her hand she bore,
As she sang a sadder lay;

"Our bark is on the azure main:
Are all my dreams of hope, then vain?
And shall we never meet again?
Mine own!—Forget me not!

When musing in some well-known scene,
Where we together oft have been,
By fountain side—in alley green;
Mine own!—Forget me not!

Think how I planted every flower
That climbs around our garden bower;
Think of my song at twilight hour—
Mine own!—Forget me not!

I'll see thy form in every cloud
That o'er the bright sky casts its shroud;
I'll dream of thee, though storms are loud;
Mine own!—Forget me not!

Ah! now the land sinks fast from view,
Into the world of waters blue.
Bear him, soft winds! my last adieu!
Mine own!—Forget me not!

GEMS OF BEAUTY.

1837, 1838.

THE DIAMOND.

LADY—regal state is thine,
Diamonds in thy tresses shine;
In their starry light I see,
Youthful Princess! type of thee.
They from some dark mine were drawn,
On a noble brow to dawn;
Kings were proud their worth to own,
Thine, too, Lady, claims a throne!

Men, to judge a Diamond's hue,
In the shade its lustre view;*
Those, too, who thy gifts would guess,
Seeking thee in loneliness,
Like these gems thy heart would see
All from flaw or blemish free;
And (having proved thy worth) must tell
That a crown befits thee well!

THE RUBY.

'TWAS here he fell—O! I would pray to rest
In his low bed, wer't not that at my breast
Clings one to chain me to a life I hate.
Since he has left me lone, and desolate.
"Hence, thou false gem!† they told me thou couldst save
Thy wearer's heart from grief—Lo! by the grave
Of him who gave thee, I must weep, and know
Of fate the darkest and most careless wo."

"I see him now—O heaven he smiles no more!
The still, cold face—the wound that streams with gore,
The creeping film that clouds his once bright eye—
And I live on!—O let me—let me die!"
"Nay, dear one, think, that to thy God was given
The Cross, to fit him for his throne in Heaven:
Look on it—here—and may'st thou ever prove
Worthy of *Him* who died to show his love!"

THE EMERALD.

DAUGHTER of Erin! weep, O! weep no more,
For sunny days shall bless thy sea-girt isle;
The gem,‡ whose tint is verdant as thy shore:
Prophetic tells that peace on it will smile.

Too long has discord waved her demon wand,
And every calm and holy thought subdued,
Kind Angels, look upon so fair a land,
Nor let it longer be with blood imbrued.

Grant that she yet may win the meed of praise
For wisdom—that for valor she hath won—
And ceasing from the strife of darker days,
Give to renown full many a patriot son.

THE SAPPHIRE.

TAKE back! take back these glittering gems!
I see them but to grieve;
O dearer far the woodland flowers
He gave me yester eve!

Those Sapphires have a sparkling light
Like summer's heaven, 'tis true;

* Connoisseurs assert, that the best mode of judging of the water of a Diamond is to examine it under the foliage of a thickly leafed tree.

† It is reported of *the* Ruby, by BACCIUS, BOETIUS, and others, that it keepeth the wearer from sorrow and danger.

‡ CARDANUS attributed to the Emerald great power in divination, as may be seen in his seventh book —"*De Lapidibus Pretiosis.*"

But fairer gifts shall deck my brow,
  Sweet violets gemmed with dew.

They tell us that this azure stone*
  O'er great ones' hearts hath power;
Yet take them back, and let me keep
  His gift—the simple flower.

Nor tell me of his castles proud;
  For, O! far more I prize
The lowly cot I hope to share,
  That in yon valley lies.

THE OPAL.

MOTHER.

Thy cheek, mine own! of late a living rose,
That could the Bulbul cheat by its rich hue,
To fancy it his own most odorous flower,
Looks pale—even so that garden empress droops
When the sun glares too fiercely on her breast.
Come, let me place a charm upon thy brow,
And may good spirits grant that never care
Approach, to trace a single furrow there!

DAUGHTER.

Thy love, my mother, better far than charm,
Shall shield thy child—and yet this wondrous gem†
Looks as though some strange influence it had won
From the bright skies—for every rainbow hue
Shoots quivering through its depths in changeful gleams,
Like the mild lightnings of a summer eve.

MOTHER.

Even so doth love prevade a mother's heart;
Thus, ever active, looks through her fond eyes;
And should it change, (believe not it *can* die,)
It is but to some other tint of Heaven,
As thou wilt know when thou a mother art.

DAUHTER.

I know it now—for am I not thy child?

THE PEARL.

Behold! half willing, half afraid
  Her bath to enter—clasping still
Her broidered robe, the Indian maid
  Awaits her dusky handmaid's skill.

And now, her ear, as rose leaf small,
  The clustered Orient pearls must leave;
While down her heavy tresses fall,
  Like mists that shroud the star of eve.

O, never pale and spotless pearl,‡
  When first from ocean's depths conveyed,
Was yet so pure as this fair girl,
  Shrinking half willing half afraid.

THE TURQUOISE.

MYRA.

Why droop'st thou, fair Sultana?
  A cloud is on thy brow,
As on that chain of azure
  Thine eye reposes now:
I've told thee all the legends
  That once could make thee gay,
I've sung thee all my summer songs;
  Why droop'st thou, lady, say?

SULTANA.

Alas! this chain of azure
  Did from mine own land come;
And thy sweet songs, too, waken
  A mournful thought of home,
Until, as in my slumber,
  That dear lost home I see,
And hear my mother's blessed voice
  Breathe like a charm o'er me.

They say the Turquoise§ changes
  As oft its wearer pines;
But, see, my gentle Myra,
  How bright this chaplet shines;
Whilst I, oppressed with sorrow,
  Wear drearily the chain.
O night! come back with blissful dreams!
  And take me home again?

THE TOPAZ.

"My master, lady, sends me here;"
"Hush, boy! I hear a footstep near."—
"She comes not yet, for age is slow;
Was ever lady guarded so?"

"Then wear this jewel‖ for his sake;
From thee all sadness it will take:
And, let me say, the ring hath spanned
The finger of the fairest hand
In Andalusia's sunny land."

* Anselmus Boetius saith that the Sapphire procureth the wearer favor with Princes ——*History of Precious Stones.* Thomas Nicols, 1652.

† The Opal is said to preserve its wearer from disease; and hence, in the East, is much used in the form of Amulets.

‡ Pearls were considered by the Ancients to be not only emblematic of purity, but preservative of it.

§ Rocus, in his History of Precious Stones, asserts that the Turquoise becomes pale and discolored, when the wearer is infirm, or afflicted.

‖ Cardanus relates wonders concerning the virtues of this stone in the cure of melancholy.

"I ought not—yet—I'll wear the ring,
And he may 'neath my lattice sing,
Soon as the first pale star he sees
Rise o'er yon grove of orange trees;
For then my sour Duenna—(Fly!
I hear her tottering footsteps nigh!)—
Will sleep at least an hour, I know.
Ah! was I won too soon?—go, go!
Was ever maiden guarded so?"

THE AMETHYST.

His parting gift! What yearning thought
To memory by its clasp is brought,
Of him who on the stormy sea,
Alas is wandering far from me!

And he, too, does he fondly dwell
On the heart-sickness of farewell?
Like me, too, courts he vainly sleep?
'Tis but *the left*, who wake and weep.

'Tis said the Amethyst* can chase
Sleep, when the wretched 'twould embrace:
But, no! 'tis love, that in this breast
His vigil keeps, nor lets me rest.

Sail on! and may thy dreams ne'er show
Thy lonely maiden's ceaseless wo;
'Tis sweet for thee to pray and pine,
So I may bear thy grief with mine!

THE SARDONYX.

'Twas in a palace—one that lent its pride
To Italy—fair land, as yet unspoiled
By fierce Barbarian hordes—there sate reclined
A Roman matron, famous for her charms.
Most famous of those charms, her purity,
Investing them with holiness: even yet
Youth lingered on her cheek, though by her side
A fair girl, ripening into woman, told
Of fifteen years of life's most tender care.
The calm Metella and her peerless child
Rested beneath a lofty portico
That looked upon Parthenope's blue sea.
Upon the matron's brow a diadem
Of rich Sardonyx† shone—that gem, 'tis said,
Will keep its wearer noble, free from fear,
And was by Scipio Africanus brought
To his ungrateful country.
———Say, why points
The mother to a Roman galley, seen
Cleaving the azure billows with its prow,
As quickly it doth near the wished-for port?
Why droop the dove-like eyes of that fair maid,
As a warm blush flies to her snowy cheek?
That galley holds her fate—her future lord,
No stranger—though as yet but seen in dreams!

THE AQUAMARINE.

How sweet on such a lovely night—fair time, to lovers dear,
When down the path of soft moonlight the gondola draws near—
For maids who in the noontide's glare, had seemed all coy and cold,
To listen from their balconies, while tales like these are told!

SONG.

Ere close thine eyes in slumber,
Fair love! I come to seek
The garland whose young roses
Are paler than thy cheek.

And in exchange I bring thee
These gems‡ thy waist to bind,
In which the ancient sages
Cure for sad hearts did find.

Good night—May angels guard thee!
And bless thy slumbers light!
Dream of thine own Enrico!
Good night, sweet love!—Good night!

THE CAIRNGOHRM.

"Place the plume in his bonnet, fair cousin; but say,
When thy lover has donned his bright battle array,
Should that plume not be foremost in all the wild fray,
Wilt thou still love its wearer as now?"

"Too well do I know mine own Jamie, to doubt
A courage that quick as a fire will flash out,
When with target and claymore, and Highland heart stout,
He laurels will win for his brow.
"For when was a Campbell's heart e'er known to quail,
Or his foot to turn back—or his strong arm to fail?

* Andrias Baccius, in his work entitled *De Natura Gemmarum*, says that it diminisheth sleep.

† Epiphanius asserts, that "the Sardonyx causeth him that weareth it, to be free from fear, and nobly audacious."

‡ Wurtzung states, that the Aquamarine is useful in all diseases of the heart.

Ah, wo to his foeman! their widows shall wail
That my brave one went forth to the field.

"Like our own native jewel* is Jamie's true heart,
And as pure as the streams from our mountains that start—
Let him go: from the right he will never depart:—
He may fall, but he never will yield."

AFFECTION.

Affection!—seek her in a mother's heart;
There dwells the shrined, from worldly guile apart:
Each impulse guiding, governing, each feeling—
New, tender, secrets every hour revealing:
No selfish thought comes near—no paltry care—
Her breath is incense, and her voice is prayer!

A mother's love! O holy, boundless thing!
Fountain whose waters never cease to spring,
Falling like dew, when all beside is sleeping,
The flowers around in life and beauty steeping:
O Love! the lord of many springs thou art;
Thy deepest, purest, in a mother's heart!

ANGER.

'Twill drive me mad!—thou at thy infant age!
Nay, then, we'll try the charm of chain and cage!
Dreaming, forsooth, of lover's step and song,
And stolen moonlight walk, and wheedling tongue:
Think not thou canst deceive my practised eye—
The creature's first advances I can spy.
No letter ever reached maiden fair
Confided to my ever watchful care,
Till thou, my lady-bird! the while I slept,
Through yonder lattice assignation kept,
And up, with silken cord, his writing drew,
I'll teach thee, minion, thy device to rue!
O what a sinful world, alas! alas!
When boys must follow maidens ev'n to mass;
And poor duennas cannot breathe a prayer,
For looking round lest sly gallants should stare:
No more shall I dare sleep at sultry noon:
Seest not, how shivering 'neath the cold pale moon,
Mine aged limbs are chilled?—But all my aches
Thou heed'st not, cruel!—Well, whene'er he wakes,
Thy sire shall know the feat; and, scarce sixteen!
What wilt thou be when ripe—so bold, when green?

PITY.

Calm on its lone and weary mother's breast
The child of poverty has sunk to rest,
Unconscious of the anguish of her soul
That wrings out tears e'en prayer can scarce control.

Not for herself those tears—they ceased to flow
For her own cares and sorrows long ago:
They fall for thee, poor babe, her link to life—
The one last treasure of the widowed wife.

Time was, when that poor mother's heart was light,
When she could sleep, and days were brief and bright.
Contempt and want she only knew by name,
'Till Death, the spoiler, to her dwelling came.

Then all was gloom!—to tread behind the bier
Of him, her sole beloved through many a year:.
The cherished father of her child unborn,
In one dark hour from her embraces torn.

But pity hath not ceased to hallow earth;
Lo! to the pleasant home, the blazing hearth,
The outcast's led by maidens, from whose door
Was never frowned away the sad and poor.

O Pity! 'tis in woman's gentle breast,
Beyond all other haunts, thou build'st thy nest;
Thence, o'er life's grief-drowned waste, like dove of yore,
Thou speed'st to say—"Be cheered! the flood is o'er."

JEALOUSY.

And she sleeps on!—
Sleeps like a child! while I must wake
The lone, dark midnight for her sake,
With burning brow, and heart of stone!
Oh! once 'twas gentle as her own!
'Till he, the smooth-tongued spoiler came!
(She smiles the while I speak his name!)
Stole its glad hopes—affections kind—
And left but Jealousy behind.

Still sleeps she on?—
Sleeps heedless of the demon near.
Who whispers in my throbbing ear,
"Fool! shall he praise *her* lips and eyne,
Who once was eloquent of thine?
Shall her inferior sicklier charms
Be folded in *his* circling arms?

* The Cairngohrm is indigenous to the Highlands, and is a stone of considerable brightness and firmness.

Thy arm is firm, thy heart is steeled!
Strike and but once!—her doom is sealed!"

Let her sleep on!
No more to wake: another gasp!
What lies so calmly in her clasp?
His picture—*his?* . . . . No; strange the brow
And curling hair: I know thee now,
Dark tempting fiend! A stranger's face,
And not Enrico's that I trace! . . . .
Mother of Heaven—thou all divine!
My thankful tears shall bathe thy shrine!

HOPE.

Whither, Siren, roamest thou;
With bright eye, and open brow,
Leading Infancy along
With thy sweet entrancing song?

Fair deceiver! dost thou go
To the mourner, murmuring low,
By his bed of care and pain,
"Sleep! the spring shall come again?"

Send'st thou o'er the angry sea,
Dreams of hamlet, field, and tree,
Say'st thou, "Droop not home is near!"
To the storm-worn voyager?

Tell'st thou Love of sunny hours
By calm lakes, in garden bowers,
(Far away Contempt and Pride,)
With the peerless at his side?

Or, in clarion-music loud,
Dost thou call to warrior proud,
"Lo! thy fame?"—or miser cold
Startlest with the chink of gold?

Or for him, who all his nights
Keeps a vigil shared by sprites—
The pale poet—through the gloom
Build'st thou up a laurelled tomb?

Dreams—all dreams—yet who could say
Flatterer, thy false music stay?
Who could break thy wand? not I—
Cheat me, dear one, till I die!

DESPAIR.

And is it thus we meet? Will this dear hand
Never again press mine? O God! O God!
Is this not some wild dream? *This* is not he
Who late went forth in manhood's stately pride
With words of hope and courage on his lips—
Those lips:—their crimson's now a stain of gore
Never to smile again—to speak my name,
Or call from Heaven sweet blessings on our babes!
Cold—cold—and stark he lies! and from his breast
His life-blood wells.—Methought . . . no, all is past . . ,
That breast which often pillowed this poor head;
Oh, on how many burning feverish nights!
This heavy, icy hand! that chills my blood,
And gives no answering pressure to my own,
Still wears my parting gift—ill-omened ring!
He swore to keep it while his life should last!
My beautiful, my brave, thou'st kept thy vow;
And shall not I keep mine, to follow thee?
Death shall not part us, nor the grave divide;
For death less fearful is than my despair.

CHEERFULNESS.

Spirit with bright and gladsome mien
(That seldom art in cities seen,)
With eyes that shine, and cheeks all glowing,
And robes in careless drapery flowing,
And silken locks, where breezes sly
Linger and sport, and love to sigh,
Thy time of joy is early dawn—
Thy mates, the deep-eyed startled fawn,
Or timid hares, that lightly pass
With feet that scarcely bend the grass—
And the glad birds, whose song begun,
Ends with the empire of the sun.
Thy garland—herbs besprent with dew;
Thy mirror—waters, deep and blue: . . . .
Thy pleasure-ground—those nooks unseen,
Where even old shepherds scarce have been
Health bounds triumphant at thy side;
And rich Pomona, like a bride,
Crowned with earth's luscious treasure brings
To thy white feet her offerings.
Fain would I leave my cares behind,
And, lured on by the balmy wind,
Seek out thy haunts remote and green,
And share with thee thy joy serene,
Spirit of bright and gladsome mien!

REMORSE.

Wilt thou no more my burning eyelids seal?
And must I ever count the weary hours
Of long, long night, when phantoms of past joys
Rise up to torture me? . . . O cruel Sleep!
Time was, thou stoop'st thy wing to close mine eyes
As gently as mild twilight shuts up flowers;
Thou brought'st me dreams—ah! yes, such joyous dreams.
'Twas pain to wake, even to a life like mine!
But *now* if o'ertasked nature seeks relief,

And thou dost hear her prayer—thou send'st me shapes,
Spectres of evil deeds and searing thoughts—
So dread, I pray to waken! . . . Shadowy Sleep,
No more an angel—an avenger now!
Yet Peace, dwelt here, *here*, in this aching breast,
And Hope did visit it with promise fair:
Where are they now? my solitary guest,
Remorse, replies, "'Twas thine own wilful deed
To drive the seraphs hence, and in their stead
Embrace a demon!" . . . .

JOY.

They come! they come! O joyful sight!
Now laugh'st thou at my dream last night?
Look, where yon cloud mounts up in air:
Sister! their rapid steeds are there!

Believest thou *now*? They speed! they fly!
Hence, ye quick tears! nor dim mine eye!
See, in the sun their hands they wave:
Welcome, my faithful and my brave!

He sees, he sees me, Clare! and now!
('Tis Godlike still) he bares his brow:—
Up, cold one! canst thou stand and wait?
Let's greet the heroes at the gate!

ENVY.

Would that this lordly dwelling were mine own!
Am I not formed to grace its ample state
Better than yon pale bride? Why, she was framed
For a far humbler lot! Those brilliant gems
(Fool! who could rob the orient mines to pour
Their treasures at *her* feet?) flash dazzlingly
O'er her meek brow: she's buried, like the maid
Of Rome, beneath her jewels. I, methinks,
Would wear them well, mine is a fitting mien
And fitting lineage. Flowers for cottage girls—
Diamonds for her of ancient ancestry.
But men are fools! It chafes me passing speech
To see this pair affect such idle bliss.
His eyes still riveted upon her face;
Hers, bent to earth, as though she were ashamed
To be so loved.——— I will I *must* away!
How can I bear this soulless, senseless joy,
And know my hand is powerless to inflict
On them a wound as painful and as deep
As that which eats, like fire, into my heart!

FEAR.

Ye angry surges of the troubled deep,
That with unsated vengeance madly sweep
Across its bosom, lashing in your ire
The shattered bark, till through a sea of fire
She seems to reel;—with demon voices telling
Of all the spoils hid in your cavern dwelling.

Not waves are ye, but fiends athirst to slay
O God! rebuke them ere they snatch their prey!
Command the thunder—it shall cease to roar;
Look on the lightning—and 'twill flash no more!
Press round me, babes! close to my bosom gather—
Save, ere we perish! Save us, Mighty Father!

Was that a sail that flushed across the abyss?
How the deeps yawn! how the wild waters hiss!
'Twas but a dream, to mock our dying fears—
A gleam again! it is—it is!—she nears? . . .
Shall we be saved? O life's Eternal Giver,
Thy name be praised for ever, and for ever!

LOVE.

"The portrait's like—*how* like! Come, look with me:
Ay here's the lofty brow where thought sits throned;
Thy finely chiselled features—here the mouth
Serious, yet sweet, as if fond words dwelt there . . . .
Ah, me! how oft I've cheated lagging time,
By feasting on this face!"

"How changed you are,
Fair cousin, by this all-engrossing-love!
Time was when you were blithe as are the birds
Whose careless carols usher in the spring:
Now mute—abstracted—lost in reverie:
Your old companions strain their throats in vain:
Their playmate heeds them not: your flowers blush out
Among the summer leaves; and your white hand
Deigns not to pluck them *now*.—If this be Love,
Good angels shield me from his wily snares

In single blessedness . . . , And yet *'tis* sweet
To read such words as these. Ah well! ah! well!
The day may come when I, like thou, must sit
Cheating with dreams the long and dreary hours
Of absence"—

"Hush, they guess not I am near,
Or, guessing, deem me still too much a child
To know what their talk means. But shall not I
Be loved as Myra, happy Myra, is!
And read, like her, love-messages so sweet
As make all other letters sound unkind . .
Alas! I have but fifteen summers seen;
And Myra, happy girl, is twenty-one!

THE END.

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